

# **Bogotá as a Spatial Sign: A Semiotic Reading of Urban Centrality in Latin America**

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## **Dedication**

To my partner, Natalia Berti, for her constant support and company during the long days of this research.

To my parents for their encouragement and understanding.





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## *Resümee*

### **Bogotá as a Spatial Sign: A semiotic Reading of Urban Centrality in Latin America**

This project proposes and applies a research strategy to understand types of cities using the case study of Bogotá. This strategy combines a conceptual framework developed around the notion of ‘centrality’ and ‘urban semiotics’ as a method of qualitative enquiry in order to comprehend complex spatial arrangements as significant constituents of cultural geographies. In this sense, this study problematizes current tendencies such as spatial fragmentation and challenges the argument that contemporary urban ensembles in Latin America are either homogenized within globalization trends or illegible entities with no structural coherence.

Bogotá is addressed as an instrumental case study to redraw generalizations developed from different methodological frameworks about the configuration process of spatial structures and their significance within the Latin American geography. Thus the study questions how urban centrality has evolved as an essential socio-cultural phenomenon and in this manner decodes the messages transmitted by main spatial arrangements. As a first step, the study discusses the construction of spatial meaning and its structural interpretation. In addition, the concept of centrality is examined in depth and an urban centrality typology is introduced to enable the analysis of spatial structures in socio-cultural terms. These contents are followed by the discussion of the existing approaches to the topic and their limitations. Subsequently, this research reconstructs the configuration of Bogotá’s spatial structure which is decoded in the last chapter.

The study concludes that the highly fragmented and uneven condition of urban space in Latin America can be read. The case study of Bogotá substantiates that there is a code that paradoxically provides spatial cohesiveness within unstable socio-spatial hierarchies. Such a spatial code is deciphered through the reading of Bogotá’s spatial structure whose super-centre denotes ‘the sacralisation of authoritarianism’. This is a ‘structural meaning’ related to a specific or intrinsic logic of spatial concentration that is useful for the further discussion of socio-spatial patterns and the meanings of Latin American cities. The concluding remarks integrate the main arguments and outline lines of action in spatial planning processes.



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## List of abbreviations

<b>AC</b>	<i>Avenida Chile – Centro Comercial y Financiero</i>
<b>FDB</b>	Financier – urban Developer Bloc
<b>HMC</b>	<i>La Hacienda's</i> Modernising Centre
<b>ISI</b>	Import Substitution Industrialisation
<b>NCA</b>	Northern Central Area
<b>PZN</b>	<i>Plan Zonal del Norte</i>



## Introduction

A traveller with a trained eye encounters a suggestive universe of varied urban spaces within Latin American cities. In some capitals such as Bogotá, Lima, Quito, Caracas, La Paz or Santiago the cityscape offers a set of places that somehow transport the visitor to different historical periods and geographies. These places are often located one next to each other. In this sense, it is possible to walk from a former colonial *Plaza de Armas* that is framed by state institutions along a significant street to a park or to a couple of squares which feature more recent foreign aesthetics. For example, European bourgeois architectural styles or architecture from the interwar period which characterise ministries and theatres. Nearby, it is possible to observe also open or introverted rationalist office buildings and towers that permeate the already mixed city image with a touch of 'fordist' modernity. Then, taking a bus or the underground, the visitor enters into fresh business districts that are usually complemented with green areas of elite clubs. The office towers are postmodern examples of corporate architecture and the district is labelled with catchy terms such as 'Sanhattan' (Santiago-Manhattan) or carries the name of an upper class neighbourhood such as *San Isidro*, *Miraflores*, *Chapinero*, *El Chicó*, *Las Condes*, etc. Within other cities such as Buenos Aires or Montevideo the experience varies to a certain extent. The observer walks along streets whose layout follows in a more accurate way Parisian or *Haussmannian* principles taking him or her somehow to a European city. Yet, whether within walking distance or not, typical global spaces such as C.B.Ds or malls that are present in other capitals of the subcontinent can also be visited.

What produces such arrangement of heterogeneous spaces? Why do these cities present morphological and locational similarities? The possible answers to these questions can be as varied as the spatial characteristics just described. Yet it is only possible to identify three schools of thought that have depicted the cities of this world region as distinctive entities strongly subordinated to general phenomena such as colonialism and the different forms of capitalism directed from remote central geographies. This characterisation has been supported and contested within the existent lines of interpretation that have identified Latin America as a cultural geography according to common historical and socio-spatial characteristics since the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, during the last three decades there have been variations in the analysis. The focus of attention has changed to individual case studies with no reference to a general theory about cultural city types. At the same time, there is a generalisation of the idea that urban space is converging towards a globalized spatiality characterised by ‘fragmentation’. This spatiality refers to the weakening or decline of traditional arrangements composed by streets, squares, city centres, etc. and the spread out of island structures such as ‘Edge Cities’, malls, entertainment centres, gated communities, etc. As a result the main urban centres in Latin America end up being described either as disjoint and illegible entities or as counterfeits of North American cities. In addition, further analyses have perpetuated former approaches that classify cities as deformed or irrational structures, and in this manner define them as ‘pathological’ entities.

On the one hand, separate analyses tend to acknowledge cities as individual creations detached from contextual conditions. Therefore they cannot fully explain the characteristics and transformations of socio-spatial phenomena at the local and regional scales. On the other hand, studies that take for granted a general convergence run the risk of dissolving their object of study, because the understanding of spatial and socio-cultural difference becomes limited to the mapping of homogenisation processes within chaotic spatial arrangements with no history or structural coherence. Consequently, we search for a conceptual framework and a method that overcomes such barriers, and at the same time, critically recover the complexity of urban research from a socio-cultural perspective.

This study proposes to read semiotically urban centrality in order to comprehend the seemingly undecipherable character of urban space in Latin America. Hence, we draw on “urban semiotics” (Hassenpflug et al., 2011) and offer a socio-cultural understanding of the notion of urban centrality that allows for the analysis of the configuration process of spatial structures and the de-coding of these structures. In addition, Bogotá is analysed mainly because this capital city appears as an initial and recurrent sample of analysis in the body of research of Latin American cities. Bogotá is therefore defined as a referent of the Latin American cultural geography and introduced as an “instrumental case study [to] redraw generalizations” (Stake, 2008: 123) about structural characteristics of Latin American cities.

Our claim is that there is a ‘spatial code’ of the highly contradictory and fragmentary condition of Bogotá. This approach involves that, despite the apparently illegibility of urban space, there is a meaningful logic between the whole and the parts of Bogotá’s spatial structure. Therefore, such structure has a particular significance and can be acknowledged as a ‘complex signifier’ that is open to the “structural interpretation of meaning,” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 141) and hence to understanding. Consequently we enquire how urban centrality has evolved in the Latin American city of Bogotá as essential socio-cultural phenomenon. We seek to answer this question in order to confront problematic spatial characterisations and establish a basis for the analysis spatial structures. Thus, this text is organised in seven chapters.

Chapter one presents the main theoretical considerations regarding the research strategy of ‘the semiotic reading of urban centrality’. These considerations substantiate the scientific and academic validity of this approach to characterise complex spatial arrangements. In this section, we discuss the ‘construction and interpretation’ of ‘spatial meaning’ mainly according to the contributions of Lefebvre (1991) and Hassenpflug (2010/2011). Our interpretation of these two references emphasises the understanding of space as “a product of social structures” (Löw, 2008: 25). As a result, a set of principles and categories are defined following the sociological dualism of “community and society” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 142). This classical concept is addressed as ‘ideal productive associative structures’ whose tensions produce spatial “textures” (Lefebvre, 1991) that arrange “spatial signs” (Hassenpflug, 2010) which can be read. Subsequently, we propose a general scheme titled ‘the analytic triad’ that allows for the de-codification of such spatial textures and its significant components.

Chapter two focuses on the concept of ‘urban centrality’. This conceptual examination involves the construction of an ‘urban centrality typology’ composed by three general types: pre-modern, modern and postmodern urban centrality. These three categories orientate the analysis of the process of configuration of spatial structures. Chapter three develops the strategies and methods used in the fieldwork. In this section we present Bogotá as instrumental case study as well as the temporal limits of the research which were defined from the origins of Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration to the 2000s (i.e. from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 2010 approximately). Moreover, chapter three describes how the analytic triad and the urban centrality typology exposed in the previous chapters were applied.

Chapter four approaches the field of analysis of Latin American cities in socio-cultural perspective. As a first step, we address the different lines of thought concerning urban space in Latin America in order to epistemologically locate the existent contributions regarding the characterisation of spatial structures in the subcontinent. Subsequently, this chapter presents those contributions. Hence, we describe and summarise the periodizations, characterisations and meanings of spatial structures according to the research works of J. Bähr, G. Mertins and R. Segre. These works are developed from the theories of ‘modernisation’ and ‘dependent urbanisation’ and apply the concepts of ‘the City’ and *Citybildung* (Bähr, 2006; Bähr & Mertins, 1995) and the notions of social ‘contradiction and struggle’ (Segre, 1986/1999) in relation to urban centrality. The chapter closes with a section dedicated to identifying the limits of these approaches. This critique involves the definition of the flaws and knowledge gaps to be bridged through our theoretical framework and research methods.

Chapter five exposes the ‘historical moments of urban centrality in Bogotá’ and focuses the attention on the production process of Bogotá’s spatial structure and its meanings. There are two main phases within this process. The first phase is outlined in chapter 5.1 and is defined as ‘pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá’. This phase extended from the mid of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 1910s and involved the creation of a ‘noble colonial city type’ as well as the establishing of key patterns of spatial organisation and semiotic characteristics that inform Bogotá’s urban centrality. Within this key phase, the communitarian associative structures of *La Encomienda* and *La Hacienda* produce the essential components of Bogotá’s spatial structure. The second phase is presented in chapter 5.2 as the ‘crisis of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá’ which lasted from the 1910s to the 1970s. This is a period characterised by the crucial role of the contradictory modernisation process of *La Hacienda* in the ‘fragmentation’ of Bogotá’s spatial structure.

Chapter six is concerned with the final configuration of Bogotá’s spatial structure. Chapter 6.1 describes the general context where a conflictive reconfiguration of the societal power relations deeply affected space production dynamics from the 1980s onwards. Chapter 6.2 addresses the intensification of spatial fragmentation that developed within about 30 years. In so doing, this section presents the final configuration of a ‘fragmented supercentre’ that characterises Bogotá’s spatial structure at the end of the 2000s. Finally, chapter seven summarises and integrates the results of



the research. This last section therefore develops a final de-coding of Bogotá's spatial structure which tells us about the "actual discourse" (Barthes, 1986) of the society. This is a discourse related to the 'structural meaning' of 'the sacralisation of authoritarianism' which involves a 'spatial code' that allows for the (re)production of Bogotá's structural conditions.

This research proves that the fragmented condition of urban space is subject to interpretation, even in the highly contradictory and unstable Latin American context. We uncover a meaningful logic of 'spatial concentration' which demystifies the discourse that characterises urban space in this world region as an illegible entity composed by a chaotic sum of spatial elements and arrangements. Thus, this study offers empirical grounded knowledge and useful categories to further develop critical urban hermeneutics. In particular, the research strategy of 'the semiotic reading of urban centrality' can orientate the de-coding of other Latin American cities. Therefore, we also provide a framework to semiotically establish spatial similarities and variances within the subcontinent as well as criteria to differentiate the cities of this cultural geography from other city types.



# **1. Theoretical considerations:**

## **The semiotic reading of urban centrality**

The semiotic reading of urban centrality suggests a research strategy that combines a conceptual framework and a qualitative method of enquiry to comprehend cities as complex cultural products. In this sense, the concept of centrality is assessed as universal or “[an] essential aspect of the urban phenomenon” (Lefebvre, 2003) in relation to “urban semiotics” (Hassenpflug et al., 2011) in order to identify and comprehend types of cities, i.e. the understanding of urban centres as significant constituents of cultural geographies. The present research introduces the case study of Bogotá to redraw generalisations about the meanings of spatial structures of Latin American cities. In this manner, it recovers the complexity of socio-spatial processes and serves to further develop urban hermeneutics.

This semiotic approach connects the three layers of urban analysis. The first layer refers to the understanding of ‘city’, and varies according to different schools of thought (Hassenpflug, 2011/2010/2006a); for example, the city as an interaction of size, density and heterogeneity (Wirth/Chicago School), as a civilization machine (Tönnies, Weber, Marx), otherness and difference (Simmel, Barthes) or the presence of centrality<sup>1</sup> (Lefebvre). This layer encompasses not only the definition of the urban phenomenon, but also of space which sets the foundation for any analysis of the built environment. The second layer looks at cities as “spatially defined individuals” (Hassenpflug, 2011: 51) or as specific symbolic sub-worlds that develop and display an intrinsic logic defined by the interaction between contexts of meaning and social practices (Löw, 2012). The third layer approaches distinctive geographies or cultural-urban archipelagos through its urban referents in order to decode patterns, common structures, and their main elements (Hassenpflug, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of centrality is relevant to define the urban phenomenon and to enquire into socio-spatial processes. This relevance is expressed in numerous texts that emphasise the essentiality and potentiality of this concept. Besides Lefebvre (2003/1991), highly regarded authors have defined centrality as a “dynamic concept which reflects the adaptation of urban form, function and life to the evolution of society” (Gottmann, 1972; 1974) and as “a key topic that occupies a primordial and privileged place in any plan of urbanism, i.e. in any effort to reshape agglomerations in crisis or to create new forms of human configurations in space” (Castells, 1971). In addition, Saskia Sassen has recaptured this interpretative potential and understands centrality as a suitable and “more abstract category” (Sassen, 1995/2000) to address urban phenomena and their processes. In this sense, she considers the complexity, ambiguity, and the specific historical meanings of other notions such as ‘city’.

The concept of centrality (first layer) has been applied to identify and decode city types (third layer) through the case study (second layer) by notable intellectuals such as Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes and Dieter Hassenpflug. In this regard, the majority of case studies used are the instrumental and the collective case study which oppose the intrinsic case study<sup>2</sup>. The intrinsic case study is functional to provide a better understanding of a particular individual unit, however, it disregards any generic situation that the individual unit might represent. In contrast, the instrumental and the collective case studies allows for the comprehension of a general phenomenon through the in-depth scrutiny of a unit or a number of units that are jointly analysed. In this context, the observable unit(s) becomes a device to facilitate the understanding of something else. This role of the instrumental and the collective case study is akin to the analysis of the ‘sign’ which, “has a concrete form and refers to something other than itself” (Sardar & Van Loon, 2010: 10). Therefore, these case studies are compatible to urban semiotics which is a method that conceptualises urban arrangements as systems of “socio-culturally encoded signs” (Hassenpflug et al., 2011: 3).

In this sense, the centres and sub-centres of different cities have been regarded as meaningful spatial facts or signs. The enquiry into their relations provides insight into the form and the content, i.e. the meaning of particular societies. This implies that socio-cultural differences are revealed by focusing on the spatial structures of cities which communicate relevant information regarding their distinctive power relations and their identity dynamics within particular geographies, such as the European, North American, Chinese, Japanese, etc. For instance, the concentric urban centrality of European cities is seen as a key spatial dimension within the historical process of the formation of the civil society and public space (Hassenpflug, 2006a/2010). This example contrasts to the appraisal of the urban centrality of eastern cores such as Tokyo or Beijing which presents a strong merge of religious and political contents which are spatially organised in circular and linear manners (Lefebvre, 1991; Barthes, 1982; Hassenpflug, 2010). In the case of Beijing, a linear spatial sequence of spatial elements conveys the persistence of a strictly hierarchically organised Chinese society rooted in imperial values, and influences contemporary urban planning and space production<sup>3</sup> (Hassenpflug, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> These terms refer to Stake’s (2008: 121ff) typology of case studies.

<sup>3</sup> A more detailed analysis of these contributions is developed in our conceptual framework further below.

In this context, the notion of centrality appears advantageous because it is a “concrete abstraction” (Lefebvre, 1991). A concrete abstraction is a type of concept that includes ‘form’ and at the same time a ‘potential content’<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the analytic advantage consists in that the morphological analysis of a spatial structure can be linked with the study of its meaning, which can be addressed through the key categories of urban semiotics such as signifier, signified, code, etc. In addition, this approach to centrality allows for the introduction of the temporal dimension into the analysis. As a concrete abstraction, centrality is actualised through “signifying practices” (Lefebvre, 1991), which produce and organise centres according to a certain ‘logic’ that allows for the functioning and the spatial representation of a given society. The production and organisation of centres is a constant in the history of the urban phenomenon and involves the accumulation and concentration of buildings, open spaces, social groups, individuals, wealth, symbols, ideas, etc.

Consequently, we relate urban centrality to the organisation of spatial symbolism and to the reification of society and culture<sup>5</sup>. This reification involves the establishment of hierarchies and references. We propose in this research that the establishment of hierarchies and references is a universal phenomenon that can be interpreted even in fragmented spaces, such as the Latin American cities which are characterised by: the generalisation of island structures (malls, gated communities, etc.), the related weakening of traditional urban elements (streets, squares, neighbourhoods, etc.) and the presence of heterogeneous central spaces that are appropriated and represented in divergent manners by different social groups and classes (see fig. 1 below).

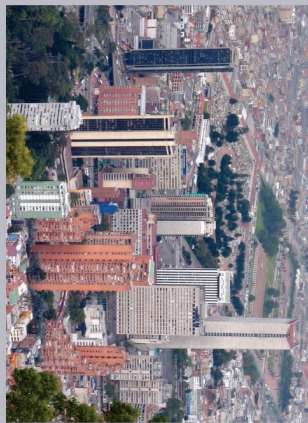
Bogotá has been one of the prime examples within the body of research of types of cities in Latin America. We address this capital city as an “instrumental case study” (Stake, 2008) to redraw generalisations developed from different methodological frameworks regarding the configuration of spatial structures and their meanings within this particular geography. In this sense, the identification of Bogotá’s intrinsic or specific ‘logic of concentration’ is useful for the further discussion of the meanings of Latin American cities and the problematization of socio-spatial patterns that develop similarly within major cities such as in Lima, Santiago or Quito. Urban planning, design

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<sup>4</sup> This quality of the notion of centrality will be further explained in chapter two.

<sup>5</sup> With the term reification of society and culture we understand the structural process whereby the social relations and representations are materialised, and in the context of this study we focus on materialisation in reference to “space production”, as conceived by Lefebvre (1991).

Heterogeneous central spaces

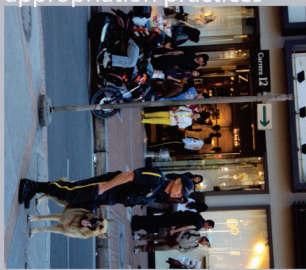


Juxtaposition of colonial layouts and C.B.Ds

Decline of inner city quarters



Weakening of traditional urban elements



Divergent appropriation practices

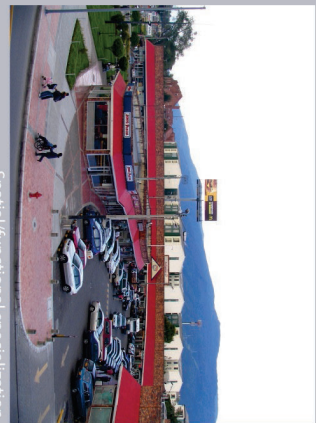


Meeting points versus controlled socialization in traditional and elite city quarters

Generalization of island structures



Spatial/functional specialization, dispersion, privatization, gating, etc.



(Photos fieldwork 2009)

Fig. 1. General characterization of Latin American cities. Photo documentation in Bogotá. Source: own elaboration

and policy making can also profit from reflections on urban centrality presented in this research which are highly valuable for the development of cooperative city planning in cities of the region.

The following chapters develop, in detail, our understanding of the semiotic method to analyse the built environment and the notion of urban centrality. Chapter one addresses the construction of spatial meaning and defines strategic terms of urban semiotics such as code, abduction and semiosis. Subsequently, we examine in depth the ‘reading of built spaces’ from a macro-sociological approach. Hence, two ideal types of associative structures and their tensions in time are revised in order to create a base for an analytical scheme that is presented at the end of chapter one. Chapter two explores the notion of urban centrality which includes the description of a typology that enables the analysis of spatial structures.

### **1.1. The construction of spatial meaning**

Our theoretical framework is defined according to the understanding of space as a “social product” (Lefebvre, 1991) and by the main principles of the field of “urban semiotics” (Hassenpflug et al., 2011). Therefore, we acknowledge history as a productive process that, in its different moments, requires “codes” (Lefebvre, 1991: 7/47f; Hassenpflug, 2010: 140). These ‘spatial codes’ provide a certain cohesiveness of the collective practices and representations, as well as physical arrangements that facilitate their realisation. In this sense, spatial code refers to a structural means that constitutes a language that allows space to be both, produced and read.

Within this dynamic, ‘spatial meanings’ are fundamental “constructs” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 18), which emerge from the relationship between significant spatial facts and individual and collective actors. This approach presupposes that within the built environment there are spatial elements that are able to generate communication. They constantly transmit ‘signals’ in particular manners that are received by observers who belong to a certain class, gender, culture, etc. and transform these signals into ‘meaningful messages’ based on their knowledge and experiences. Thus, we refer to a double process that is spatially and socially pre-structured. There are material creations that are made according to social relations, rules, hierarchies, etc. that trigger a communication process that is completed by the interpretation of observers who are

defined by their social context. The construction of meaning is therefore never independent of the observer but it is “simultaneously objectively pre-determined - which thus subjectively limits interpretative freedom”<sup>6</sup> (Hassenpflug, 2010: 18).

Elements of the built environment become signal transmitters from the very act of production. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991: 71f), this act involves a particular ‘rationality’ that consists in the organisation of a sequence of actions with a certain objective in view, according to pre-existing socio-spatial conditions, i.e. the spatial element to be produced. This organisation is oriented towards the production of a spatial element involving the mobilisation of *materials* (i.e. pre-existing elements or stuff like stone, wood, bone, leather, etc.) and *matériel* (tools, arms, language, images, instructions, agendas, etc.) by means of intellectual activity. This is a procedure that is inseparable from these two aspects. First, the orientation towards a goal and thus a ‘functionality’ which is defined as the ‘end and meaning of the action’. And secondly, the ‘structure’ that is set in motion involves know-how, skills, gestures, conflicts, co-operation in work, etc. Consequently, the act of production should not be divorced from the sum of its parts; put another way, the collective whole cannot be detached from the material preconditions of the individual and collective activity; thus, the signal that is broadcasted through the spatial element refers primarily to real or possible acts. This rationality holds true whether the aim is to create simple or complex spatial elements, e.g. a piece of furniture, a garden, a building, an arrangement of different constructions, etc.

Thus, essential information regarding the purpose and the social relations involved in the creation of the spatial element is inscribed within its morphological characteristics e.g. through conventions. These characteristics broadcast coded information that is interpreted within abductive processes in everyday life. The inference process of abduction is a kind of reasoning discussed by Charles Sanders Peirce that permits (in contrast to induction or deduction) the possibility of decoding the signals transmitted by a spatial element according to explanatory hypotheses that are formulated in a semi-logical way (Hassenpflug, 2011: 52; 2010: 20).

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<sup>6</sup> In this sense, we partly agree with Löw’s (2008) proposition that confers a fundamental role of the observer to his or her social context within the construction of meaning. However, we call for the understanding of meaning as an outcome of a dialectical process that is not only, “socially pre-structured,” (Löw, 2008: 46) but, also determined by pre-existing material cultural products that constantly transmit signals which influence sense making processes.



For example, a person normally takes the decision to purchase a residence according to its capacity to provide privacy and security, aspects required in domestic life. Privacy and security can be conditioned by different contextual dimensions, e.g. the social characteristics of the neighbourhood, the building's exposure, etc. However, physical elements of the residence might also influence its purchasing. The buyer infers from the observation of spatial features, such as the gable roofs used in suburban houses whose shape involves a general convention of 'domesticity', that the building is optimal to host the buyer's and his or her relatives' daily life since they convey warm feelings of traditional intimacy. Thus, the transmitted signal turns into a meaningful message through the buyers' interpretation that is informed by his or her socio-cultural background, age, past experiences, etc. Other potential buyers would recognise the signal of 'traditional domesticity' as incompatible with their life style preferences, and therefore choose to purchase other kind of residence such as an apartment or a house which presents 'modern' characteristics such as flat roofs, transparent façades, etc.

The construction of meaning in the contexts of design and scientific enquiry of the built environment involves further aspects to take into account. Creators and interpreters have to deal methodically with the correlations and mediations between form, function and structure. On the one hand, the designers work with the definition of structures that apply forms connected to purposes. For example, an urban designer's struggle on a project that combines different forms in order to facilitate the interrelation of a set of functions in a particular spot, e.g. commercial, institutional, residential, etc. Within this design process, the historical convention of concentricity might be introduced to trigger abductive processes; particularly, the assignment of a sense of 'meeting' in order to encourage future inhabitants to perform practices of social communication in this spot.

On the other hand, the scientific interpreters have to identify the different interrelations to construct meaning. A typical example is that of the analysis of post-war slab housing developments. This sort of spatial arrangements can trigger different subjective interpretations, e.g. cleanliness, monotony, marginalisation, etc. However, a researcher equipped with further interpretative tools may identify that these arrangements are configured according to the structure of the Louis Sullivan's statement 'form-follows-function'. The different spatial components and their interrelations are defined according to this structure, and consequently the meaning of this sort of spatial

configuration refers to “monofunctionalism” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 19), which is connected to serial modes of construction, accumulation processes, modern life styles and standards of hygiene.

These examples suggest that inhabitants, users, designers or ‘city readers’ use a set of information when they construct meaning. The difference is that in the case of scientific enquiry “urban semiosis” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 20) is involved. This is a process in where the capturing of the signals takes place within abduction, but it is complemented through the use of specific knowledge. In this context, spatial meaning is the result of a “cultural construction” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 141) completed through conscious and informed interpretations that assist the understanding of socio-spatial realities.

In this regard, an insightful spatial reading or interpretation requires the integration of particular “historical, social, and cultural knowledge” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 19/141). At the same time, this integration of scientific contents assists with the responses to fundamental questions regarding the process of semiosis. Specifically, looking to answer these questions: Who produces space? What kind of space is produced? Which is the purpose of that space production? That is, questions which deconstruct the functional and instrumental character of built spaces and, in so doing, recognise ‘meaning’ as an actual dimension of space that takes part in its creation and reproduction.

## **1.2. Structural interpretation of spatial meaning**

According to our previous arguments, the decoding of space requires the consideration of production processes which essentially involve social relations. Thus, the proposed integration of knowledge to decode spatial structures is primarily based on the understanding of space as “a product of social structures” (Löw, 2008: 25). This approach includes the careful consideration of the different forms of association and therefore the classical sociological dualism of “community and society” (Hassenpflug, 2010/2011) is discussed along with its spatial outcomes. In addition, we introduce a set of categories that combines Lefebvre’s (1991) conceptual triad with key categories of C.S. Peirce’s characterisation of signs, (Liszka, 1996; Hassenpflug, 2010) which allows

for the systematic analysis of signal transmitting processes in relation to spatial practices and representations of space.

### **1.2.1. Ideal productive associative structures and their tensions**

Hassenpflug (2010: 142f) identifies community and society as two possible social states or aggregate conditions which apply to every human being simultaneously, at any time, and everywhere. According to this point of view, the two conditions pervade in practice, which is a situation that can be observed in the different socio-cultural contexts and presupposes diverse spatial outcomes. Drawing on this approach, we propose to emphasise conceptually the relationship between society and space by acknowledging these two social states as ‘ideal productive associative structures’. In this manner, space is addressed as both, product and *material*, for the establishing and reproducing of those associative structures.

From this perspective, community refers to social groups defined as “direct human relationships” and socio-spatial “conventions” (Hassenpflug, 2010; Lefebvre, 1991). This is related to basic forms of accumulation and appropriation of nature in which labour i.e. the application to *materials* (Lefebvre, 1991: 71) is highly integrated, polytechnic and holistic. Therefore, collective actions operate within fixed and hierarchical relations in which birth, age and sex determine social positions. Reasoning is conservative, emotional aspects predominate; exchange takes place mostly at the local level and institutions are “total” (Hassenpflug, 2006a / 2010; Werlen, 2009).

In this sense, the spatial code of community provides cohesiveness and facilitates consensus around vertical and static forms of authority. This form of ‘spatial hegemony’<sup>7</sup> is related to the configuration of spatial arrangements meant to trigger abductive processes based on visual intensity and great cohesiveness between compounded units e.g. blocks, streets, voids, etc. The construction of meaning in this context is pervaded by a condition of intended legibility; intended legibility is achieved through a hierarchical disposition of spatial elements according to conventions, e.g. great height, verticality, horizontality, etc.

Following Lefebvre (1991: 142ff), the cases of verticality (contrast) and monumentality (size, scale) can illustrate this point. While verticality is used to

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<sup>7</sup> A detailed definition of this concept will be presented further below.

communicate intensity and magnificence; monumentality might be applied to convey collective will and collective thought. Therefore, these intelligible spaces are instrumental ‘to say what is wished to be said’. The spatial element transmits an intended signal but, at the same time, is used to conceal contents or codes within the abductive process. Yet, an informed interpretation can break these hidden codes. In reference to Lefebvre (1991), spatial meaning in this case emerges from the understanding of verticality and monumentality as a mode of expression of the exercise of ‘authority’. On the one hand, nothing escapes the surveillance of power within a space characterised by verticality, hence this space ‘represses’ the observers; on the other hand, the monumental scenario might actually conceal the desire to gain or retain power; therefore it can be connected to ‘arbitrariness’.

The decoding of concealed contents in the analysis of urban centrality in Bogotá is particularly important. For instance, we identify the highly instrumental character of the central space *La Plaza de Bolívar* that was configured within the consolidation of a communitarian associative structure<sup>8</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been reinforced thereafter. This node is spatially characterised by a particular combination of the conventions of verticality and horizontality meant to communicate ‘harmony’ in reference to Colombian society’s prevailing institutions and social history. Our analysis exposes that while privileged actors base their planning and urban design actions on a natural interpretation of this signal, a hidden code related to “authoritarianism” is (re)produced. This will be explained in depth in chapter six.

‘Society’, the second of the two ideal productive structures, is defined by ‘articulated individualisation’ based on ‘reason’ and institutionalised in the division of labour (Hassenpflug, 2010: 142f). Power and social practices are mediated through ‘abstract systems’ (money, writing, expert coordination, contracts, etc.) and ‘specialised institutions’ (Werlen, 2009; Hassenpflug, 2010). This transformation is connected to changes in *matériel* and labour, and entails increasing mechanisation and commoditisation. Thus, socio-spatial hierarchies are redefined and different forms of specialisation emerge and enter into conflict with socio-spatial elements of ‘community’ e.g. integrated spatial facts or traditional spatial representations like essential oppositions, symmetries, images of the world, myths, etc. Such conflict develops

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<sup>8</sup> See the case of *La Hacienda*.

differently according to the particularities of each reality and unfolds within two structural variations that are contained in the ‘societal condition’.

The first variation is related to ‘modernity’ and implies the rationalist logic where the physical forms of structures and objects points to a specific function. This involves differential effects in the realm of pre-existing, and emerging spatial elements and arrangements. Pre-existing ‘communitarian’ spatial facts are either used as *material* or transgressed according to conjunctures of social practice. Traditional or pre-modern spatial creations are subjected to re-interpretation within processes of secularisation which presupposes varied spatial outcomes according to each society. For instance, in the case study of Bogotá, we identify how contradictory interpretations of the ‘city centre’ are made by different members of the cultural-political elite in the turbulent 1940s and 1950s; these contradictions informed the development of a feeble and partial re-codification of the city’s original core. This phenomenon involved a juxtaposition of a ‘noble’ political sub-centre and a linear Central Business District where emerging associations and new institutions attached to traditional forms of authority spatialised. We describe this particular spatial configuration towards the end of chapter five.

Emerging spatial elements in modernity are particularly produced according to intended legibility or “perfect readability” (Lefebvre, 1991: 148) of their function. This relationship between object/element and function includes utilitarian as well as semiotic implications. The form-function relationship is instrumental for material reproduction of spatial elements. It also facilitates the acceleration and great accumulation that characterises modern life. The realm of economic efficiency is imposed, this affects the legibility or coherence of spatial arrangements, which appear as a residue of the ‘individual’ development and functionalist agglomeration of standardised spatial elements or architectural objects, e.g. the case of the profitable construction industry of residential complexes. On the other hand, the aesthetics of functionalism, characterised by rationalism, modulation, repetitiveness, etc. are applied to convey efficiency, cleanliness or productivity; used language in different contexts such as state architecture. For example, we describe, in our analysis of the ‘crisis of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá’, the coexistence of traditional spaces of power and the introduction of modernist layouts and free standing rationalist public buildings (e.g. the case of the CAN complex discussed in chapter five). This coexistence of spatial elements develops into a meaningful structure that is connected to the political will to

convey the achievement of ‘progress’, without jeopardising the traditional forms of association and their representational spaces.

The second variation of the societal condition redefines the “use value” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) of spatial facts. This redefinition stabilises the process of increasing accumulation by filling the emotional gap left by the rationalist logic of modernity. This is a ‘postmodern’ condition that modifies the model of pure specialisation by introducing ‘communitarian’ features into spaces. As a result, form does not follow function but is aimed at “the senses and sensibility,” (Hassenpflug, 2006b) and has to imply “affective charges” (Lefebvre, 1991) within abductive processes. This is to say that social and spatial elements of ‘community’ enter the productive process (i.e. history) as *material* in order to be used in various ways for diverse purposes. A typical example of this condition is the development of thematic satellite cities in current globalised China in which ‘community builders’ attempt “to capture the imagination of the upwardly-mobile middle class,” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 92) by introducing spatial symbolism and the aesthetics of traditional western life styles into the different buildings and open spaces. In our case study, we observe the generalisation of *centros comerciales* i.e. malls. This phenomenon is dominated by a hegemonic group (defined as the Financier Urban Developer Bloc - the FDB) that fakes communitarian meeting places and other public spaces and, in so doing, accelerates the urban sprawl, monopolises urban development and shapes the city’s spatial structure in its own terms.

In reference to the above, ‘community and society’ does not imply opposition or dichotomy; it refers to a duality that permeates in practice. The harmonic and/or conflictive interactions of these two ideal productive structures in history have produced a wide range of meaningful “spatial textures,” (Lefebvre, 1991) that are open to interpretation and are subject to “structural semiosis” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 141). Drawing on Lefebvre (1991: 158ff), spatial textures are encoded, and thus, the role of structural semiosis consists in identifying the ‘logic’ between the whole and the parts of these arrangements.

### **1.2.2. The analytic triad**

Structural semiosis requires a set of articulated concepts in order to decode the signals transmitted by the components of spatial textures and to identify the logic

between these components. The duality between ‘community and society’ provides us with ideal types of collective producers of space and their typical outcomes in terms of form, content and structure. These notions assist in the characterisation of socio-spatial realities. However, the comprehension of spatial structures requires the triangulation of further categories to grasp the practical and conceptual processes that sustain them and render them significant. Therefore, we propose the tertiary combination of Lefebvre’s (1991: 38f) scheme composed of ‘representational spaces’, ‘spatial practice’ and ‘representations of space’ with key notions of C.S. Peirce’s “semeiotic grammar” (Liszka, 1996).

Lefebvre’s triad is understood in this research as a universal tool that allows for the analysis of built spaces, regardless of time and mode of production. In this sense, we highlight the definition of ‘representational spaces’ as entities related to coherent “systems of non-verbal signs” (Lefebvre, 1991: 39/48) which involve significant built spaces. All sort of individual and collective actors ‘live’, or directly experience representational spaces; these actors construct meaning through daily activities, descriptions and attempts to understand these spaces. This means that representational spaces are a basis for practical uses and abductive processes that presuppose acts of interpretation/perception which, in turn, (re)produce those spaces.

The dimension of ‘perception’ is addressed through the notion of “spatial practice” (Lefebvre, 1991: 33/38; Harvey, 1989: 220f). ‘Spatial practice’ includes the maintenance of flows (goods, money, people, labour power, etc.), organisation and networking (communication, mutual aid, informal, and formal social infrastructures), use and non-use of space (land, built environments), control (zoning, social and estate surveillance) and mental representations (mental maps, social and physiological measures of distances; spaces of fear and trust or desire, etc.). However, practical uses and abductive processes (in Lefebvre’s terms signifying practices) entail ‘conception’ as well as ‘perception’. This conceptual dimension of signification is addressed through the category of ‘representations of space’ that we approach as the interpretations of various organised groups, among them, privileged actors who identify “what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (Lefebvre, 1991: 38). Following Schönig (2011: 398f) we should add that ‘privileged actors’ within contemporary conditions not only refers to state and market forces. This category also includes organisations of the civil society which are supported by the elites and hold a high reputation as well as

special means and capabilities that allow them to contribute to the production of hegemonic representations of space, as far as they do not disturb the foundations of the prevailing mode of spatial development.

Addressing spatial textures from this ‘analytic triad’ is strategic, in opposition to bidirectional approaches, as it prevents the researcher from falling into determinisms. In this context, the city reader is compelled to distinguish the different interrelationships, oppositions, and tendencies between “the lived, the perceived and the conceived” (Lefebvre, 1991) to decode significant spatial facts.

The study of the ‘semiotic dimension’ of representational spaces becomes essential to recognise these interrelationships, oppositions and tendencies and to “[transform] transmitted signals into meaningful messages, i.e. into understanding” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 17/20). This semiotic dimension refers to a ‘layer’ that merges, overlaps and influences the complementary functional and aesthetic strata, which cumulatively constitute the entirety of these spatial facts. The relationships between the semiotic, functional and aesthetic layers define a structure that facilitates the performance of spatial practices. From our perspective, the functional and the semiotic layers are intrinsically related due to the tight association between production processes, objectives and meanings described above. This approach therefore implies that the aesthetic layer can be acknowledged as an “effect” (Lefebvre, 1991: 148) of the other two dimensions.

An eloquent example of this dynamic between spatial layers is the case of the modernist paradigm in which the functions were reflected in aesthetic form through the realization of machine-cities whose semiotic content had to do with the prevalence of ‘social equality and healthiness’ achieved by means of “scientific rationality” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 21). If we follow this model, neither aesthetics nor functionality are performed in an isolated manner. The transmission of signals, which is highly connected to functionality, informed the appearance of arrangements that facilitated the performance of ‘Fordism’, as dominant mode of production in post-war times.

In order to delve into the semiotic layer, specialised categories are required. Firstly, we need to address representational spaces as ‘spatial signs’. This term acknowledges the components of the built environment as signal transmitters or



‘signifiers’ which refer to “signifieds” (Hassenpflug, 2010/2011). From the materialist perspective depicted above, the primary signified conveyed by a given signifier is strongly related to its function, and hence to real or potential social acts. This is the essence or ‘denoted signified’ which refers to an ‘inter-subjective validity’ which is a product of long term “cultural practices” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 11/18). In this sense, ‘denotations’ belong to the primary level of signification that contrasts to ‘connotations’ which encompass a secondary level.

Connotations are variable interpretations that are ‘projected’ onto the signifier and therefore, can be defined as “external contents” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 18/21). Returning to our above example of the gable roof and detached house, the denoted signified is ‘traditional domesticity or family’. This sort of building transmits primarily this signal, yet, it can also trigger other senses. Observers might relate this type of residence to affluence, success, childhood, fear, joy, isolation, etc., if these are their connotations. Thus, denotations are limited, objective and universally valid whilst, connotations are manifold.

In this sense, the detecting of denoted signifieds (i.e. spatial decoding) requires knowledge about the manners in which the signals are transmitted. In other words, it is required to know the ‘semiotic grammar’ of spatial signs. We adopt C.S. Peirce’s “original and interim typologies,” (Liszka, 1996: 18/34ff) which are based on the distinction between the ‘representative condition’, ‘presentative character’ and the ‘interpretative power’ of the sign.

Initially, denotative signifieds are transmitted through particular features which define the presentative character of the spatial sign. This implies that the essence of a sign is, as previously mentioned, ‘recorded’ in material characteristics which constitute the “ground of the sign” (Liszka, 1996). Consequently, the ground of the sign is the fundamental means through which the relations between the signifier and the signified are established. According to Peirce’s theory, such relations take place in “three essential ways” (Liszka, 1996: 37). Firstly, if the presentative qualities of the sign are ‘similar’ to the signified then the spatial sign is called an ‘icon’. If, on the other hand, the presentative characteristics of the sign are ‘contiguous’ with the signified, the sign is an ‘index’. Finally, if the sign establishes its correlation with a signified via

‘arbitrariness’ the sign has to be categorised as a “symbol” (Liszka, 1996: 37; Peirce, 1991: 12/30; Hassenpflug, 2010: 17).

In reference to this approach, the iconic sign reveals its content (the signified) through its physical form. This implies that if there is an icon of something “it has to be similar to the something, and to be used as a sign of it” (Calabrese, 1994: 328). This requires that “pre-existing types” (Calabrese, 1994: 330) inform the production of the signifier that is also utilised in consistency with its signified. This mode of representation is normally present in architectural and urban facts whose forms or appearances are related to ‘spatial conventions’ as well as different ‘types’ (e.g. residential, commercial, mixed use, institutional, etc.). For instance, a spatial fact produced to exercise ‘power’ might present within its materiality the conventions of ‘verticality’ or ‘great height’; which are pre-existing and universally valid modes used to express that social practice. Thus, such spatial fact characterised by verticality or great height is called iconic signifier of a certain ‘authority’ which impresses any spectator. On the other hand, the type of slab housing construction with prefabricated elements can be an example of an “iconic transmitter of [...] mono-functionalism,” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 19) or ‘spatial collectiveness’.

In contrast to the icon, the indexical signifier divulges the signified by means of ‘contiguity’. Therefore, it is the sign’s spatial or temporal location rather than any qualities that it has which contributes to make it an index (Liszka, 1996: 38f). In the realm of urban analysis, Hassenpflug (2010: 19) provides the example of elements such as gates, barriers, fences, walls, etc. present in housing estates, industrial parks, etc. These elements can be interpreted as indexical signifiers of ‘closeness’. Hassenpflug’s analysis exposes that when these elements are observed in Chinese typical residential compounds, the denoted signified is prevalent in the social state of “community”.

Consequently, the icon and the index are opposites. While the icon possesses a character that renders it significant even though it is no longer used, the indexical sign loses its content if its signified (or the spatial practice associated to it) is removed. An example of the first situation can be the case of an abandoned temple or a church used for other purposes other than worship. These spaces preserve their iconic value connected to sacredness even though the original socio-spatial conditions change. In order to illustrate the second example, we need to return the case of the residential

compounds mentioned above. If the enclosed residential compound is used for a purpose that socially opens it (e.g. commercial), but the fences and gates remain, these elements no longer qualify as indexical signifiers because their signified (enclosure, community) is no longer present. This involves the existence of those elements surrounding the buildings becomes capricious or 'arbitrary', hence they turn into 'symbolic spatial signs' of an enclosure or a communitarian condition that does not longer exist.

It is important to note that both, denotations and connotations participate in the (re)production and transformation of built spaces according to the social and historical particularities of each socio-spatial reality. Within our appraisal of Lefebvre's triad and the semiotic method, 'representations of space' are a type of "connotations" which refer to interpretations projected onto significant spatial facts. Drawing on Gottdiener (1986a) and Lefebvre (1991), we emphasise the conceptual and inter-subjective dimension of connotations which contrasts with the perceptual phenomena involved in individual and collective spatial practices. In this sense, our target is the 'collective representations of space' of diverse privileged actors that conceptualise urban space in diverse manners in order to control it. This conceptualisation refers to a symbolic process in which some representations of space succeed whilst others fail to influence space production processes.

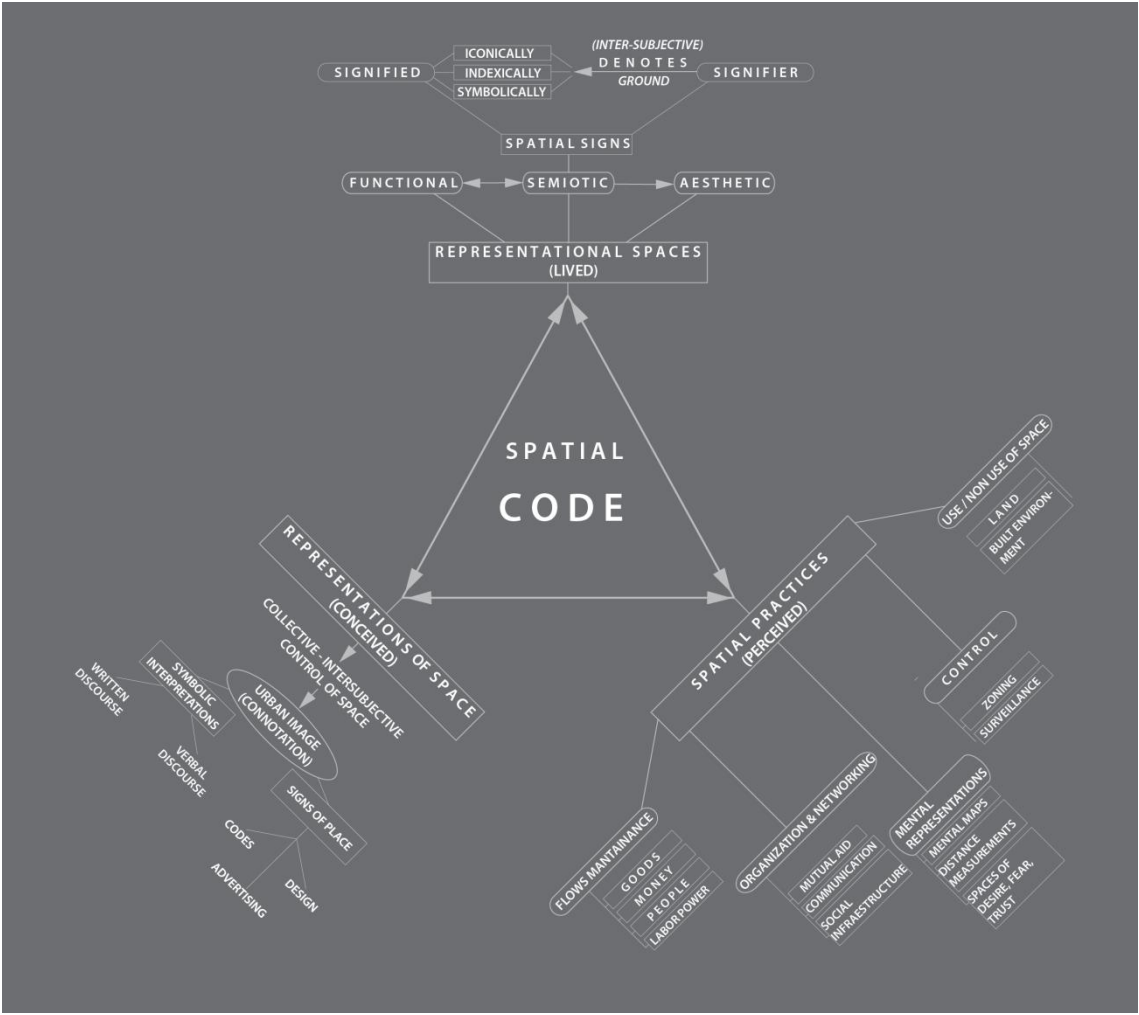
The outcome of this process is the temporal establishment of the "urban image" (Gottdiener, 1986a: 216). This notion refers to an instrument (*materiél*) that emerges from the clash and encounter of the different organised social groups' images of space. In this sense, the urban image condenses the relationship between 'symbolic interpretations' of various organised groups. In the case of the analysis of modern or contemporary spaces such groups correspond to the civil society, the market, and the state or public realm. These organisations are also permeated by class, gender, age, status, etc. At the same time, the urban image entails different 'signs of place' which appear as vehicles for the organisation of group action. Both, symbolic interpretations, and signs of place, can be analysed through field work: the first by studying written and verbal discourse on the basis that these expressions are significant symbolic referents in the organisation of behaviour; the second, by identifying the different images and their conception process according to corresponding groups' interests and interactions.

Thus, there are numerous elements subjected to scrutiny that imply inter-subjective judgments open to structural analysis. In reference to written and verbal discourse, sources of information are: planning commission reports, literary narratives, transcribed expert interviews, etc. On the other hand, image analysis includes the revision of a variety of sign vehicles like laws that regulate the symbolic use of private property such as building and design codes, real-estate advertising, traffic codes, etc. as well as the different graphic material of urban or regional master plans, spatial schemas, etc. (Gottdiener, 1986a: 206f/214).

Considering the multiple and numerous representations of space it is essential to identify hierarchies and relationships. Drawing on Gottdiener (1986a), Novy (2004) and Sum (2009), there is a need to identify the symbolic interpretations and signs of place related to the groups which, on the one hand, possess a need for maintaining overarching invariant spatial signs; and, on the other hand, manage symbolic generalisations within the spatial practice. This refers to the identification of political and economic forces within symbolic processes. In this sense, the researcher is compelled to deal with sources related to the agency of key actors who aim at acquiring and retaining cultural and political predominance, based on a consensus where the presence of spatial signifiers are essential i.e. ‘spatial hegemony’. Additionally, it becomes necessary to investigate the *matériel* applied by other dominant groups to convert representational typifications of use values that emerge from daily life into ones which are more useful for the exchange value of spatial facts and arrangements.

The following figure summarises the different components and relationships involved in our analytic triad:

Fig. 2. The analytic triad



Source: Own elaboration



## **2. Conceptual Framework**

This section revises the notion of centrality in reference to our initial theoretical considerations. These considerations involve the description of centrality as a concrete abstraction, and the advantages of using this concept to approach the form and meaning of spatial structures. Consequently, chapter two is arranged in two parts. The first part explores centrality in its most abstract level; this includes the understanding of the concept's internal logic and contradictions as well as the definition and differentiation of related terms such as 'urban centrality' and 'centre'. The second part refers to urban centrality as a key socio-spatial phenomenon through which society and culture reify. Then, we present a typology which includes several kinds of urban centrality, at the general and specific levels of space production.

### **2.1. Centrality as a concrete abstraction**

Lefebvre's (1991: 399) understanding of 'centrality' links the concept of 'accumulation' with the idea of the 'existence of things'. He observes that there is no 'reality' without a 'concentration of energy'. At the same time, he relates the notion of concentration to its opposite, dispersion. So Lefebvre identifies different dualities, such as centre-periphery, accretion-dissipation, condensation-radiation, agglomeration-saturation, concentration-eruption, implosion-explosion, etc. From this perspective the category of centrality applies to the physical, mental and social fields, and therefore to all kinds of natural and artificial structures, subjects and entities. There are many examples in this regard: 'the city', which is an artificial structure, has always a centre; the 'concentric cobwebs' that fall into the category of organic structures; or the 'body' that is a focus of active productive energies. We include in this illustration 'individuals and objects' which constitute potential elements of reference for social practice, e.g. an individual within a hierarchical social organisation, or a milestone within a given area that serves for individual and collective orientation, etc.

This approach suggests that centrality is a concept that is abstract and concrete at the same time, i.e. a "concrete abstraction" (Lefebvre, 1991: 100). Following this idea, 'centrality' presupposes an 'empty form' (e.g. concentricity, circularity, physical convergence, etc.) that can be filled with a 'content' (e.g. sacredness). When the empty form of centrality is filled, it is 'actualized'. Within the urban realm, 'centrality' is

actualized through “signifying practices” (Lefebvre, 1991) and, as a result, complex spatial textures such as city centres respond to a certain ‘logic’.

Centrality also involves dialectic. This dialectic consists of the “gathering-together [...] and simultaneity of ‘everything’ that is susceptible of coming together – and thus of accumulating [...] at a point or around that point” (Lefebvre, 1991: 331f). This accumulation is spatially organised either through co-operation or through conflict. Hence, while space is organised according to a logic, it becomes limited. This phenomenon essentially has contradictions since ‘scarcity of space’ can only be observed in, or near urban centres<sup>9</sup>.

Additionally, the actualisation of centrality involves an imaginary component and is mediated by the three essential geometric forms that enable organisation and are signified in particular manners: the point, the curved line, and the straight line. ‘The point’ is the primary element because it is connected to the mathematical origin of the notion of centrality and to its application in the analysis of ‘abstract space’. Such connection means that any given point is a point of “accumulation and reference” (Lefebvre, 1991) and it indicates two fundamental aspects. The first, that a particular point (of accumulation) is surrounded by an infinite number of other points which is a situation that proves the fact of the continuity of space; and second, that around a given point (or isolated point) any surface can be described and analysed as well as any variation following an infinitesimal change in its distance from the centre. Therefore, there is actual and potential accumulation at a point or around a point (Lefebvre, 1991). This condition stipulates the possibility of actualizing two types of city centres: ‘full-infinite-centres’ (accumulations that are open to expansion) and ‘empty-finite-centres’ (voids that are defined by accumulation around them). On the other side, ‘the straight line’ and ‘the curved line’ stipulate the quadrangular, or circular shape that a city centre might present in the horizontal plane. At the same time, the feature of ‘linearity’ informs the horizontality or verticality of a city centre (i.e. three-dimensional view).

Drawing on Lefebvre (1991: 149ff/330), the essential characteristics of ‘fullness, emptiness, quadrangular, circularity, horizontality and verticality’ can be defined as ‘the

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<sup>9</sup> The author emphasises that it is not possible to legitimately speak of scarcity when it comes to space because it is always open to demographic and technological expansion. In this regard the space of nature remains open; due to the use of technology anything can be built anywhere: “at the bottom of the ocean, in deserts or on mountaintops - even, if need be, in interplanetary space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 330).



basic formal units of urban centrality'. These units are abstract resources that acquire functional reality and semiotic content through social practice. They allow the structural organisation of spatial elements (which involves a coherent relation between the whole and the parts) as well as the structural interpretation of spatial textures such as city centres.

Fig. 3. The Basic Formal Units of Urban Centrality



Source: Own elaboration

## 2.2. Urban centrality and the reification of society and culture

In reference to the above, the act of creating a city centre involves the organization of space. Within this perspective a 'city centre' appears as a locus of action in which authority is exercised to establish and maintain certain social relations. Thus, we define city centres as spatial textures that primarily denote 'power'. This representative condition of city centres rests on the quality of 'hierarchy' which implies the organization of different spatial elements according to a series of levels with different importance. For Barthes (1986: 92ff) this is a fundamental issue and the actualisation of centrality is regarded in his texts as the spatial organization of the signifiers of the main social habits (e.g. purchase, religiosity, exchange, power, etc.) whose distribution or correlative position communicates the 'actual discourse' of a given society. In this sense, spatial structures are complex signifiers that can be interpreted.

Following Barthes' approach, we relate 'urban centrality' to the organization of spatial symbolism which stabilizes material and symbolic socio-spatial relations in time. This means that the hierarchical arrangement of the spaces where key spatial practices converge (i.e. governmental, commercial, religious, etc. sub-centres) not only provides accessibility, legibility, coherence, and collective "self-recognition" (Hassenpflug, 2006a) but, this structure also offers the possibility to read into the actual meaning or 'truth' (Barthes, 1986) of a given social group. This means that society and culture primarily reify<sup>10</sup> through urban centrality and that this phenomenon constitutes an ideal subject of structural semiosis.

### **2.2.1. Urban centrality and particular modes of production**

Urban centrality has to do with organizing and stabilizing spatial practices. Nevertheless, this condition is permeated by two contradictions: the scarcity of space and the invariable and perishable character of spatial concentration (Lefebvre, 1991: 399). From our perspective, this contradictory condition exists because there is always potential for conflict and crisis in socio-spatial practice. We refer to the tension between the consensus and quarrel in socio-spatial relationships. In reference to Lefebvre (1991), history proves that the urban centrality of dominant societies has always been displaced or shattered, but also that it constantly re-emerges. For instance, the urban centrality of antique Athens shifted from the semi-circular area defined by chiefs and warriors to the temple, and from the temple to the functionally and symbolically diversified Agora and the *Pnyx*. On the other hand, present day urban geography demonstrates the invariability of urban centrality because despite countervailing forces such as liberalization, flexibility, etc. 'the centre' continues effectively to concentrate wealth, means of action, knowledge, information, etc. (Lefebvre, 1991: 332f; Mumford, 1979: 256f). Thus, urban centrality is a constant but it is also open to transformation according to socio-spatial conjunctures.

Thus, this contradictory nature of urban centrality involves the principle of organization of space and symbolism which are valid for each historical period and for each particular society. Within our framework, a 'historical period' primarily refers to the dominance of a particular mode of production (i.e. a communitarian or a societal condition) and consequently we identify three categories based on several contributions:

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<sup>10</sup> See definition of this term in chapter one.

‘pre-modern, modern and post-modern urban centrality’. While ‘pre-modern urban centrality’ is strongly related to the associative system of ‘community’, the notions of ‘modern and postmodern urban centrality’ are connected to ‘society’<sup>11</sup>. In addition, the concepts of modern and post-modern urban centrality involve the socio-spatial tensions of ‘community’ with the social state of ‘society’.

The following chapters depict pre-modern, modern and post-modern urban centrality. These notions are meant to enable the semiotic analysis of spatial structures and the socio-spatial processes involved in their production. They have to be addressed in relation to the dualism of ‘community and society’, not as oppositions or dichotomies. They are ‘ideal types’ that permeate in the different socio-spatial realities. Thus, the researcher is compelled to identify the different relations between them in order to understand complex spatial textures such as city centres.

#### **2.2.1.1. Pre-modern urban centrality**

Communitarian associative structures produce arrangements that feature pre-modern urban centrality. This type of urban centrality consists of the separation of, and at the same time, the combination of “sacred space and profane space” (Hassenpflug, 2006a). Socio-spatial systems featuring pre-modern urban centrality comprise all important functions and represent them as a whole. In addition, these systems are characterised by the tight arrangement of the spatial signifiers of the social, political, and religious spheres. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991) and Barthes (1982), this sort of spatial configurations transmit ‘merged signals’ of ‘power’, ‘divinity’ and ‘wisdom’ (in modern terms, ‘knowledge’). Additionally, the spaces where the collective practices of ‘exchange’ of material goods and non-material signs (e.g. oral and written ‘language’) concentrate are dependent, in functional and semiotic terms, on those spaces that denote power, divinity and wisdom. Examples of this type of spatiality are the hierarchical concentrations around temples or market places which, as wholes, constitute the “societal and spatial centres” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) of a given communitarian structure. At the same time, both, societal and spatial centres might be located in the ‘topographical centre’ of the spatial arrangement. Consequently, the middle point or area becomes “the most accessible space” (Hassenpflug, 2006a).

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<sup>11</sup> See our definition of ‘community and society’ in chapter 1.2.

The construction of meaning within pre-modern urban centrality arrangements is permeated by ‘intended legibility’. This legibility involves a high degree of ‘iconicity’ which means that the different hierarchical relationships between the components of the spatial arrangements are set to communicate ‘power’ with great intensity. Such intensity is achieved through a clear contrast between ‘the basic formal units of centrality’ (see fig. 3). According to our definition of ‘community’<sup>12</sup>, the ‘intended legibility’ of a pre-modern centre is a fundamental *matériel* to accomplish ‘spatial hegemony’<sup>13</sup> around the vertical and static structures that underlie traditional forms of authority.

Examples of pre-modern urban centrality are the Greek and medieval cities. According to Hassenpflug (2006a), these cities are historically interrelated and comprised sacred and profane institutions through their traditional layouts and building types. In this sense, the author identifies the Agora as the forerunner of the medieval Market Place. He observes the interconnected institutions of the Agora as a spatial expression of the transformation of a rural, subsistence oriented palace economy to an urban, trade oriented civil economy.

In addition, Hassenpflug (2006a) draws on K. Polanyi and depicts the Agora and the Market Place as ‘total institutions’ which are spatially defined by a sort of ‘proto-specialization’. In the case of the Agora, this sort of specialisation can be observed in the tight arrangement of functionally differentiated central spaces: the parliament (a kind of proto-town hall), the court, several temples, the mint, the *stoa* (the first university) and the theatre. In regard to the medieval Market Place the proto-specialization refers to the development of a ‘bipolar’ central space composed by the cathedral and the central square that is framed by different institutions. On the one side, the cathedral entailed a complementary “infrastructure of empathy and compassion, i.e. the cloister, hospital, poorhouse, graveyard, etc.” (Hassenpflug, 2006a); and on the other side, the Market Place offered public and civic spaces such as the town hall, the school, the court and the prison.

This bipolar configuration is observable in the countless market places developed from about the year 1000 AC inspired in classical proportions and religious images (Humpert & Schenk, 2001: 300ff). An eloquent case of pre-modern iconic

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<sup>12</sup> See the definition of this concept in chapter 1.2.1

<sup>13</sup> See the definition of this concept in chapter 1.2.2

representation of power are the towers of the centres of the Mediterranean world created by powerful socio-political actors of the emergent market economy (bankers, merchants, etc.) who competed for social supremacy and spatial representativeness within the cityscapes (Gottmann, 1966: 208; Lichtenberger, 2002: 27f). When there were conflictive social encounters, a leading group would commonly require the towers of the losing party that were to be razed. According to Gottmann (1966), at least one case is documented when more than three hundred towers were knocked down in Florence alone by political decree.

Fig. 4. Pre-modern urban centrality.  
Iconic towers in San Gimignano (Italy)



Source: Lichtenberger (2002: 28)

#### **2.2.1.2. Modern urban centrality**

‘Modern urban centrality’ is characterised by a strong disruption of pre-modern urban centrality features. In this sense, it is connected to the first structural variation of ‘society’<sup>14</sup> and hence to the acceleration of socio-spatial processes and increasing accumulation. As a result, urban centrality is pervaded by a strong contradiction between spatial concentration and spatial specialisation which involves a ‘double tendency’. On the one side, there is the tendency of the re-structuring of pre-existing central spaces. This tendency includes the transformation of original or traditional city centres, and the formation of new types of centres such as the Central Business District

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<sup>14</sup> See the definition of this concept in chapter 1.2.1

(C.B.D.). And on the other side, there is a trend towards spatial homogenization and fragmentation.

Consequently, the pre-modern spatial compression of signifiers of power, divinity, knowledge (wisdom) and exchange is separated, and consequently this significant compression is redefined affecting spatial hierarchies. Specialized associative practices inform this phenomenon creating particular institutions. This presupposes the functional and semiotic emancipation of the spaces that denote 'knowledge' and 'religiosity' from the spaces that signify 'power' and likewise the separation of the main signifiers of 'knowledge' from those of 'information'. At the same time, the spaces that denote 'exchange' attain growing specialization through the mediation of abstract systems and fictitious commodities (Werlen, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 1989). This growing specialization develops along with "the concentration of the labour force" (Gottmann, 1974) which strongly influences the value of space.

In this regard, the prime observable phenomenon is that original pre-modern arrangements turn into 'city centres' which are no longer 'spatial totalities' but "specialised subsystems" (Hassenpflug, 2006a). These specialised subsystems become a component of secularized spatial configurations which are characterized by homogeneity and the presence of functionalist infrastructures e.g. motorways, industrial/manufacturing clusters, residential complexes, as well as separated and specialised administrative, business, religious, cultural, educational or commercial centres, etc. This secularization entails that communitarian spatial signs are transgressed through representations of space and spatial practices. Space and time no longer implicate one another making the "city centre" dependent on specialised technologies of transport and communication. Additionally, city centres are subjected to potential displacements. This refers to a strong rupture in the value of space which generates the 'dislocation' of the triad composed by the 'social, spatial and topographical centres'. Such spatial dislocation affects the typical pre-modern 'intended legibility' and therefore the analysis and the construction of meaning within urban contexts acquire more complexity.

A key phenomenon of this dislocation is the process of *citybildung* which involves spatial specialization and the related formation of a privileged central space

called 'The City'. This term derives from the name given in London to the location of the town centre that was composed of the tertiary and quaternary economic sectors. However, Lichtenberger (2002) calls for an extension of the term within the revision of historical roots of urban modernity and points out that *citybildung* not only refers to an outcome of economic growth, but also involves political processes, such as, the enlargement or reduction of the State and socio-cultural variations.

In this sense, Lichtenberger (2002) revises the beginnings of *citybildung* in European cities such as London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and notes that the construction of the bureaucratic apparatus of absolutist States within privileged residential areas of the city centre preceded the configuration of 'economy-cities' such as the *Champs-Élysées* or the *Kurfürstendamm*. This phenomenon implied the formation of a 'centre-polarity' that re-structured traditional hierarchies and informed growth dynamics. Moreover, *Citybildung* appears to be socio-culturally determined. According to her, in North America, the agglomeration of commercial enterprises developed within privileged locations in the town centres, whereas, in Europe this only occurs in exceptional cases. An exceptional case is the central areas of heavily damaged German locations during the war (e.g. Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main). Those locations have new 'Cities' which emerged in a context of a re-construction led by the liberation of land uses.

This concrete process of functional specialisation and redefinition of urban centrality is conceptualized through the legacy of urban treaties such as the 'Athens Charter' in the framework of the mature phase of industrialization called "Fordism" (Hassenpflug, 2006a). The emergent specialised disciplines of spatial planning and architectural design defined a new representation of space in which socio-spatial acceleration and technical performance were prompted through systematized principles such as zoning as well as the introduction of "spatial centrality" (Hassenpflug, 2006a) as a tool for planning to organize spatial arrangements in functional and semiotic terms. This aspect can be observed in planning principles defined within CIAM congresses, such as the "fifth urban function" (Hernández, 2004) and in particular urban plans designed by remarkable figures of modernism like *Le Corbusier*. In this context, existing spatial textures served as inspiration to develop famous utopian proposals. For instance *la ville contemporaine* combines the verticality of North American cities with the European urban centrality patterns. It provided a reminiscence of Moll's 18<sup>th</sup> century

welfare council while simultaneously featuring a strong and functional “centre in the park” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) composed by stations for trains and air taxis as well as 24 skyscrapers which hosted offices accompanied by numerous smaller buildings that functioned as shops, cafes, restaurants, etc. Another example is *le plan voisin* which was conceived to replace a considerable section of Paris’ city centre. The project’s layout emphasised centrality, similar to typical pre-modern arrangements, but paradoxically provided forms to symbolise the redefinition of hierarchies between social classes through the 18 high rise residential buildings which created a “kind of proletarian centrality” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) in opposition to the traditional centre based on bourgeois supremacy.

Another phenomenon of dislocation is the creation of the C.B.D. which involves key elements related to spatial practices and representations of space inherent to the societal condition. First of all, the C.B.D. develops within an increasingly specialised context informed by a growing diversification and “division of labour,” (Lefebvre, 1991) where activities based on abstract knowledge are segregated from agglomerations of manufacturing processes (Gottmann, 1974). Nonetheless, tertiary and quaternary occupations continue to be essentially associated to material processes because they ensure, through the application of particular skills, “the running of production and distribution, the control of flows and the maintenance of the systems” (Gottmann, 1974: 19). In this sense, social and functional hierarchies operate in practice within specialization processes, which require a mode of representation in order to be spatialised. However, pre-modern forms of actualizing centrality are not functional in this context and therefore the traditional relations between ‘the basic formal units of urban centrality’ are redefined to accommodate modern efficiency and technical performance. Such redefinition is developed within the structural principle of form-follows-function which presupposes the ‘individualization’ of spatial products. In the context of the actualisation of centrality, the traditional iconic convention of verticality is re-introduced, however, in the realm of single spatial objects. Drawing of Lefebvre (1991) and Gottmann (1966/1974), this convention provides the possibility to create an ‘efficient concentration’ of activities (supported by the lift) and at the same time transmits the signal of potential power.

The main outcome of this process is therefore the formation of a particular spatiality called “C.B.D” or “grouping of skyscrapers,” (Gottmann, 1974;



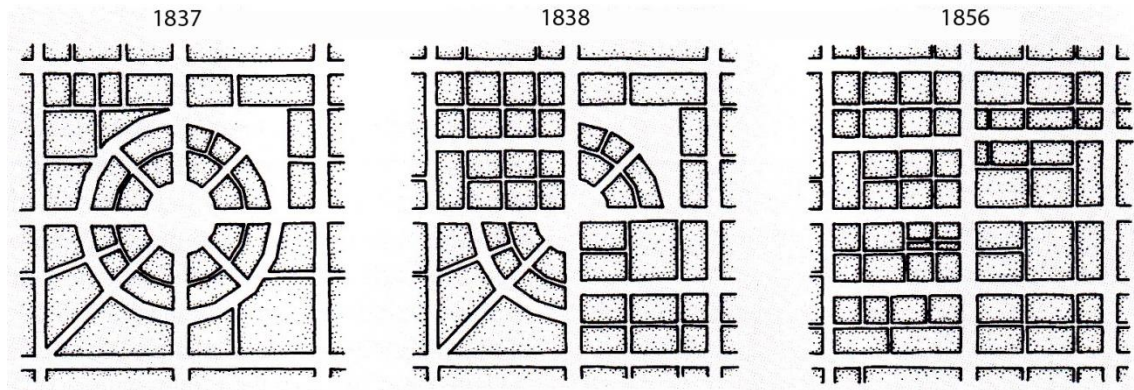
Lichtenberger, 2002; Hassenpflug, 2006a) that, as a type of ‘centre’, ensure the maintenance of a mode of production where “transactional activities” (Gottmann, 1974) become increasingly dominant. According to this double process of specialization and concentration the C.B.D. can be acknowledged as a general type of urban centrality associated to the performance of a modern or capitalist accumulation.

However, the C.B.D. also involves socio-cultural qualities of the geography that first produced it. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, North America appears as a socio-spatial context that featured optimal ideological, as well as material preconditions, for the formation of C.B.D.s. In regards to the ideological dimension, it is possible to identify certain spatial interpretations that pioneered the formation of these modern vertical spaces. On the one hand, there were strong rural ideals of the first settlers such as the “common man” (Hassenpflug, 2006a; Gottmann, 1966: 197). The first settlers’ ideals involved characteristics of “modern-free-thinking-pragmatism” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) that influenced the creation of horizontal and orthogonally structured rural-urban landscapes that stood as “republican counter-designs,” (Hassenpflug, 2006a; 2010). In this context, the quadrangular structure of urban centrality (i.e. the grid) rooted in European symbolism, is established, with no emphasis on a particular logic of concentration (e.g. on a point, at a point, along a line etc.). Thus, the grid was re-signified in North America; its resignification opposed previous significations. Particularly, it opposed the European bourgeois city and its feudal roots which historically ‘sacralised’ concentric hierarchies (i.e. the logic of concentration converging on a point). Moreover, the ‘political anti-urbanist’ postures such as Jefferson’s Homestead Act of 1862 reinforced this tendency within the process of modernization by cataloguing the grid as a sign of equality and democracy and hence it was “not compatible” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) with spatial hierarchies that were identified as part of the “moral evil” (Lichtenberger, 2002) ascribed to the city.

However, this anti-urban ideological context develops along with the culmination of the colonial relationship with Britain. This condition meant that the (non-urban) grid served as a means of ‘production’ and “accumulation of capital on the spot” (Lefebvre, 1991: 152). Therefore, the grid was seen in terms of its potential economic performance within the emerging land market mechanisms for capital accumulation. Quadrangular lots were easier to sell and guaranteed maximization of the use of space and profit. In other words, ‘space’ was introduced into exchange processes

and was used as a means for ‘external’ economic purposes and not as “an end in itself” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) from the very beginnings of the modernization process.

Fig. 5. Layout re-structuring



Source: Lichtenberger (2002: 167)

Thus, a typical modern structure consisting in the quadrangular form that follows the prime function of “profitability” (Lefebvre, 1991) became generalized as well as the vertical configuration of central spaces in spite of the original aim to avoid this sort of hierarchy. This iconic arrangement ensured the development of an ‘efficient spatial hierarchy’ and at the same time a spatial sign of the North American geography, capitalism itself, and its primary associative structures characterised as the “oligarchy of leading economic groups” (Lichtenberger, 2002).

Fig. 6. C.B.D (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

### 2.2.1.3. Post-modern urban centrality

‘Post-modern urban centrality’ is related to the second variation of ‘society’<sup>15</sup> and therefore has to do with two synchronic opposing phenomena: the deepening of modern tendencies, as well as the resolution of the internal contradictions that emerge from them. Within this framework, ‘postmodern city centre ideal types’ emerge to accelerate and stabilise the socio-spatial accumulation process through the re-introduction of ‘communitarian’ features.

#### *Postmodern city centre ideal types*

In reference to the evolvement of ‘city centre ideal types’, it is possible to distinguish the persistence and generalization of the C.B.D. and the ‘mall’. This trend is related to the historical conjunctures of the inter-war and post-war period which put the U.S.A. as the “trendsetter” (Lichtenberger, 2002) of the globalization process. However, this trend also involves systemic dynamics.

In regard to the spread of the C.B.D., such dynamics are connected to a clearer dominance of ‘fictitious capital’ (i.e. some kind of money bet on production that does not yet exist) that is linked to a world scale deregulation of the “financial system” (Harvey, 1989: 107). In this sense, the functional hierarchy of ‘credit’ arises as a fundamental aspect of a mode of production that historically requires ‘financial innovation’ and thus the empowerment of financiers to reproduce itself (Harvey, 2010). This implies an increment of flow of “transients” i.e. foreign capitals and labour (Gottmann, 1974). These ‘transients’ involve the presence of external organizational interests, habits, representations, images, etc. in the different central, semi-peripheral and peripheral geographies and therefore uneven and diverse socio-spatial effects.

Consequently, the C.B.D. can be acknowledged as a key spatial “strategy” (Hassenpflug, 2006a). The agglomeration of the offices of trans-national companies, banks, immigrant and local labour, etc. makes possible the presence and expansion of fictitious capital as well as the performance of all the managerial activities based on abstract knowledge that supports it. Moreover, it indicates the strong and increasing influence of the credit system (and hence speculation) over the regulation of “capital circulation” (Harvey, 1989: 108). Thus, the generalization of C.B.D.s involves the

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter 1.2.1.

transformation of the overall meaning of the decision-making structure in general as well as, of specific cores of power e.g. capital cities. Yet, this transformation has also to do with the introduction of powerful signifiers within cityscapes. Considering our previous assessment of ‘modern urban centrality’, C.B.D-like spaces denote economic power and supremacy over other forms of exercising authority. In addition, these vertical centres trigger associations which are related to the North American geography, e.g. the association of vertical cityscapes to ‘progress’. Therefore, the C.B.D not only entails a spatial and socio-economic strategy but also a cultural tactic.

Drawing on Hassenpflug (2006a), this process involves the development of two types of C.B.D.s: the ‘political C.B.D.’ and the ‘empirical-C.B.D.’. Where the first type is a mechanism to spatialise strong socio-political strategies that aim at substituting the regulatory power exercise via politics for liberal market solutions; the second, is a typical product of capitalism that develops when optimal preconditions are set up, such as a liberalized real-estate market or the absence of State interventions.

In this sense, political-C.B.D.s are ‘conceived’. This refers to planned spaces where the representations of space of ‘privileged actors’, such as politicians and spatial planners prevail. Examples of this type of C.B.D. are particular districts in Europe such as the project of *La Defense* in Paris that, according to Hassenpflug (2006a), have not been able to effectively compete with the old centres of the French capital since it remains dependant on the life, energy and support of public institutions that maintain the support of “strong political traditions” (Hassenpflug, 2006a). This lack of true hierarchy is also observed in Frankfurt am Main where the urban life still orbits around the old market square in spite of the visual dominance of the about 20 skyscrapers that provide a sort of “hybrid-image” (Hassenpflug, 2006a) composed by a traditional European and modern American centrality to this German city.

By contrast, empirical-C.B.D.s do not imply a direct intervention of the State in their design and development. For Hassenpflug, an eloquent example of this sort of central district in Europe is the C.B.D of Warsaw, a capital that has become increasingly characterised by a vertical skyline, a space that can be identified in countless different locations such as places in U.S.A, and the Anglo-Saxon context in general.

Fig. 7. Frankfurt's hybrid urban centrality image



Source: Lichtenberger (2002: 49)

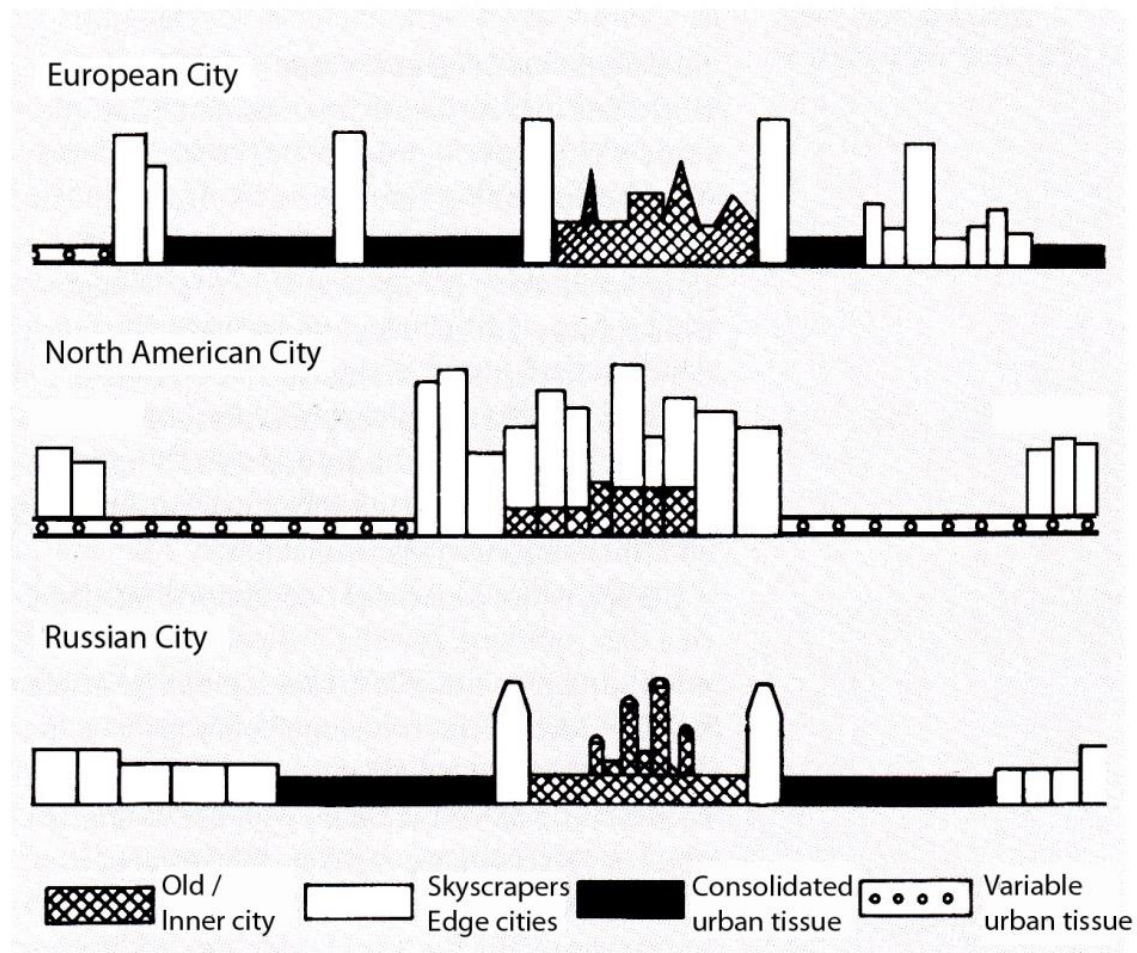
Thus, the distribution of different types of central spaces in the different urban geographies is a key issue of socio-cultural differentiation. In this regard, Lichtenberger (2002) identifies the skylines of different cities, particularly those of the European and North American contexts where the location of high-rise buildings essentially differs in reference to the 'historic centres'. In North America, the vertical structure of skylines reflects the peak of land prices in the city centre. Lichtenberger underlines that, only in the North American geography, the exponents of the economy accomplished high-rise buildings in the city centre. It is in the centre where they compete and exhibit their economic capacity and financial stability through a mutually outbidding skyscraper construction. This type of construction involves a huge input of capital and requires an extremely quick amortization as well as an enormous increase of land prices and rents. Therefore, within this perspective, the skyscrapers become the vertical reflection of the extreme increase of land prices in the city centre.

Conversely, the city centre of European cities remains 'hollowed' from high-rise buildings due to the influence of the historical and monumental preservation as well as the pressure of the public opinion (Lichtenberger, 2002). In this context, the new banks, insurance companies, large companies, and hotels hold a respect distance from the traditional landmarks. An essential differentiation can be identified in cities of former socialist countries as well. Lichtenberger notes that in such contexts the high-rise



construction took over a monumental representative task according to a whole urban conception, aiming at accentuating political and cultural values through the spatial hierarchy of cultural centres, universities, etc.<sup>16</sup>

Fig. 8. Skylines in socio-cultural perspective



Source: Lichtenberger (2002: 181). Legend translated by the author

On the other hand, ‘the mall’ appears as a complementary spatial mechanism that facilitates the high performance of consumption whilst providing socio-spatial dynamics inherent to the social state of ‘community’. This is mainly achieved through the “faking” (Hassenpflug, 2006a; 2006b) of traditional spatial characteristics that enable the typical “social communion” (Gottdiener, 1986b: 291) that has historically taken place in pre-modern central spaces (the square, the commercial street, etc.) and

<sup>16</sup> The author observes that skyscrapers as dominant urban objects mark, in Russia’s case, not only the edge of the old city centres, but also the entrances to older suburbs in a centripetal way. This pattern varies in regard to the town size. Concerning big cities, high-rise constructions mark the growth front of central commercial districts along with the frequently used underground stations and the nodes of mass transport systems which become the outliers of “the City” (Lichtenberger, 2002).

has been affected by the specialisation and dispersion of the different urban functions within the territory under the conditions of modernity (society).

In this sense, the mall offers a pedestrian proximity of services and spaces for socialisation but in the form of a ‘service’ provided by the real-estate market. Such service, defined as, “city-tainment” (Hassenpflug, 2006a; 2006b) transforms traditional elements and representations of inner cities (i.e. pre-modern urban centrality) into ‘commodities’ enclosed in a container where different kind of mixed-use staged spaces generate the atmosphere of collective appropriation and civic values. In this sense, ‘false signifiers’ of well-being, happiness, prosperity and particularly of “civility”<sup>17</sup> (Hassenpflug, 2010) are instrumentally arranged. Such arrangement informs an entertaining, emotive and smooth experience that transforms the citizen into a ‘shopper’ and isolates them from distractions and unwanted circumstances. Consequently, these false signifiers trigger associations which do not correspond to the reality of social relations and practices. In so doing, the true meaning of the mall is concealed, which, drawing on Gottdiener (1986b: 292), has to do with the intersection of the ideologies of ‘profit-taking’ and ‘consumption’.

Fig. 9. The Mall. Source: Stefano Boeri



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<sup>17</sup> We adopt Hassenpflug’s definition of ‘civility’ which refers to isonomic relations that develop within spaces that are subject to public law.

In sum, the spread out of the C.B.D and the mall not only involve the typical spatial representation of today's 'boundless capitalism'; but, also the generalisation of spatial features of the North American cultural geography, and its associated denoted significations.

### *Reflexive practices and representations*

As mentioned above, besides city centre ideal types there are also 'reflexive practices and representations' within post-modern urban centrality. According to our understanding, these reflexive practices operate similarly to "city-tainment," (Hassenpflug, 2006a; 2006b) and therefore refer to strategies that aim at bringing pre-modern (communitarian) and modern (societal) characteristics together in order to accomplish a wide number of objectives within the "stabilisation" (Harvey, 1989) process of the dominant mode of production. Those strategies deal with the elements of the 'spatial code of community'<sup>18</sup> according to diverse interests, circumstances and conjunctions. Hence, functional, semiotic and aesthetic aspects of pre-modern urban centrality might be imitated (like in the case of the inner configuration of the mall for profit-making purposes) or 're-coded' to handle spatial needs and conflicts which are produced within the typical socio-spatial fragmentation and specialisation of modernity.

Within the post-modern condition, the urban centrality of a given spatial arrangement might be subjected to different kinds of interventions. For instance, emphasis might be put on traditional logics of spatial concentration (e.g. radio-concentric) if a given city 'lacks' sufficient space to expand or 'suffers' from negative effects of socio-spatial segregation and specialisation, e.g. poor access to services and State institutions or the decline of natural environments.

Moreover, intertwined functional and semiotic aspects arise in the context of fragmentation and homogenisation; for instance, the reinforcing or shifting of local identities and spatial differentiation. These aspects develop according to different processes such as the emergence of socio-political awareness of collective problems, or the struggle to attain 'urban competitiveness' within the increasing deregulated economic world context. In this scenario, key phenomena such as the decentralisation, distribution and hierarchization of spaces of power, exchange, knowledge, communication, etc. become a key subject to be wrestled with. This includes several

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<sup>18</sup> See chapter 1.2.1.



elements: first, the ‘displacement’ of the triad composed by the social, spatial and topographical centres which has to do with the degree of spatial fragmentation of urban systems; second, the potential questioning of the generalisation of centre types such as the C.B.D. or the mall that promotes existent tendencies of spatial unevenness and fragmentation; and third, the (re)interpretation of the representative condition of former, and new spatial signs, which are essential within the construction and transformation of collective identities and the power relations that underlie it.

### **2.2.2. Urban centrality and particular societies**

In reference to the above arguments, the main purpose of actualizing centrality is to establish and organise, hierarchically, a structure of spatial signifiers that contribute to the reproduction of a given society, and to its differentiation. This phenomenon takes place at the general and specific levels of production which implies that urban centrality i.e. the hierarchical organisation of spatial symbolism is valid for society in general, as well as for specific social groups. Hence, it is possible to identify various cultural geographies with distinct forms of urban centrality which presuppose different spatial representations of power.

Barthes (1986/1982) and Lefebvre (1991) distinguish at the more general level western and eastern manners of actualising centrality. Such actualisations involve basic modes of abstraction (symbolization) that are mediated by means of essential geometric forms. On the one hand, Barthes works on the categories of ‘fullness’ and ‘emptiness’ which coincide with the two basic modes of conceiving a centre identified by Lefebvre as: ‘full and empty’. And on the other hand, Lefebvre points out that a city might have a circular and a quadrangular form since the act of abstraction is mediated by the curved line and the straight line. As a result, both cultural worlds present cities that feature round and quadrilateral shapes, yet the characteristics of fullness and emptiness are applied differently.

#### *Fullness*

Taking Europe as an example, Barthes (1982) asserts that city centres are always ‘full’ since they have spatially condensed the values of civilization according to western metaphysical conceptions. Thus, the spatial signifiers of spirituality (churches), power (offices), money (banks), merchandise (department stores), language (cafés,

promenades, etc.) are normally arranged in a compact and concentric manner. A socio-cultural explanation of this particular spatial configuration is based on the idea of the “sacralisation of the circle” (Strassoldo, 1980: 29ff). This sacralisation is related to a historical outcome of associations made between representational spaces, hierarchical social relations as well as early representations of the world and divinity.

In this sense, Strassoldo (1980) borrows the analyses of E. Durkheim and Paulet in reference to the signification of the circle in western history. According to Durkheim, the hierarchic conception of the circle is developed by Plato and was connected to the physical configuration of the Greek Polis and to Plato’s own aristocratic background that entailed a ‘central’ position in public gatherings as well as in the public political doctrine. In this context the circle is the planar projection of a socio-political pyramidal hierarchy whilst the spatial structure gathers sacral institutions and powerful families. In reference to Paulet, the shifts of the ‘circle’ in history are also rooted in the Platonic philosophical tradition. This school of thought understood the organisation of the cosmos in concentric circles, the world itself as a circle, and the centre as its cause i.e. God. This is a sacred representation of space that later influenced other urban and architectural phenomena since it was taken over by Christianity (which called God the centre) within the urban medieval boom. Later on, the circle was re-interpreted by Renaissance scholars who signified ‘the centre’ in reference to the centrality of man, e.g.: “The soul is the centre of nature,” (Marsilio Ficino), “God has placed man in the centre of the world,” (Pico della Mirandola), “All universe surrounds man, as the circle surrounds the centre,” (Paracelssus), and “The soul is a sort of circle,” (Giordano Bruno)<sup>19</sup>.

This general process of secularisation related to urban centrality can be identified within further analyses. For instance, Hassenpflug (2006a; 2010: 27ff/68) addresses the urban centrality of the European city as a fundamental spatial dimension of the process of formation of a ‘civil society’ liberated from the ties to tradition and ‘community’. In this sense, Hassenpflug identifies the historical nodal form of the city and the construction of its ‘public content’ according to the evolution of exchange processes within the socio-spatial ensembles of the Agora, the Roman Forum, and finally the arrangement of Market Place, church and city hall. This medieval spatial

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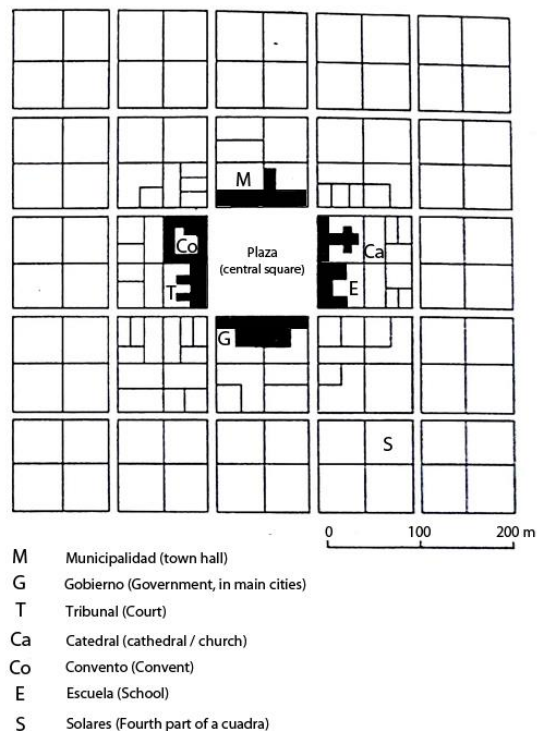
<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Strassoldo (1980: 30).

configuration provided a hierarchic spatial representation to an “urban society founded in Christian faith and bourgeois self-determination” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 68). In addition, this medieval configuration is seen as a spatial fact that “defines the European city to this day” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 68).

In reference to this historical process of configuration of the market economy, other scholars discuss the instrumental character of iconic elements of European urban centrality within the expansion of Christianity and colonialism. For his part, Lefebvre (1991) addresses the grid of roman settlements and medieval *bastides* used in the Spanish colonial towns. According to him, this spatial element functioned as an instrument of the colonial empire to produce a vast space i.e. Latin America which, according to the author, continues to be produced despite the vicissitudes of imperialism, independence and industrialisation.

In this sense, the urban centrality of colonial cores is understood as a ‘superstructure’ foreign to the original space that served as a political means of introducing a social and economic structure related to a process of extortion and plunder serving the accumulation of wealth in Western Europe (Lefebvre, 1991: 150ff). A concentric iconic pattern in each centre was imposed through a square, bordered by colonial institutions, from which the grid extended indefinitely in every direction. Each quadrangular lot had an assigned function, “while inversely each function is assigned its own place at a greater or lesser distance from the central square: church, administrative buildings, town gates, squares, streets, port installations, warehouses, town hall, and so on” (Lefebvre, 1991: 151). Thus, Lefebvre concludes that “a high degree of segregation is superimposed upon a homogeneous space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 151). This understanding coincides with both Rama’s (2004) and Romero’s (2004) interpretations which acknowledge this spatial organisation as a “dream of an order,” (Rama, 2004: 35) - a strategy to project an European, Hispanic and Catholic world in America which included both: the veto of spontaneous movement towards the differentiation of the new urban centres and its societies, and the absolute negation of the pre-existent cultural forms of the surrounding territory (Romero, 2004).

Fig. 10. Urban centrality of Spanish colonial cities



Source: Bähr and Mertins (1995: 12)  
 Slightly modified. Legend translated by the author

### *Emptiness*

Emphasising ‘emptiness’ in spatial organisation is mainly expressed in eastern spatial referents which feature circular as well as quadrangular forms. Barthes’ analysis underlines the contemporary influence of Tokyo’s ‘empty’ and ‘circular’ centre. According to his observation, one of the most powerful cities of modernity “turns around a site both forbidden and indifferent, a residence concealed beneath foliage, protected by moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen, which is to say, literally, by no one knows who [...] a circle that hides the sacred ‘nothing’” (Barthes, 1982: 42). Subsequently, Barthes reflects on the effects of this sort of ‘empty centrality’ in everyday urban life and points out that it subsists, “not to irradiate power, but to give to the entire urban movement the support of its central emptiness, forcing the traffic to make a perpetual detour” (Barthes, 1982: 32), a situation that contrasts with the concentric effect of the western centre.

Thus Tokyo, as main spatial signifier of the Japanese cultural geography, is characterised as a “spread circularly-polynuclear” (Barthes, 1986/1982: 38ff) urban

territory surrounded by a set of commercial sub-centres that are usually marked with a huge railway shop-station (e.g. Ueno, Asakusa, Ikebukuro, etc.). According to Barthes, these centres have the typical erotic signification connected to purchase and meeting, but are stripped of that sacred character of city centres in Europe that, in addition to the commercial function, present referents connected to civic and spiritual practices. Moreover, the station's essential function generates a sort of instability (i.e. the incessant departure) that 'thwarts' the commercial centres' concentration. Thus, the author ends up categorising these secondary centres as places that collect each district in the void of its station: empty points of affluence from all their "occupations [and] pleasures" (Barthes, 1982: 38f).

Fig. 11. Tokyo's 'Empty' Centre (Map of Tokyo – late 18<sup>th</sup> century)



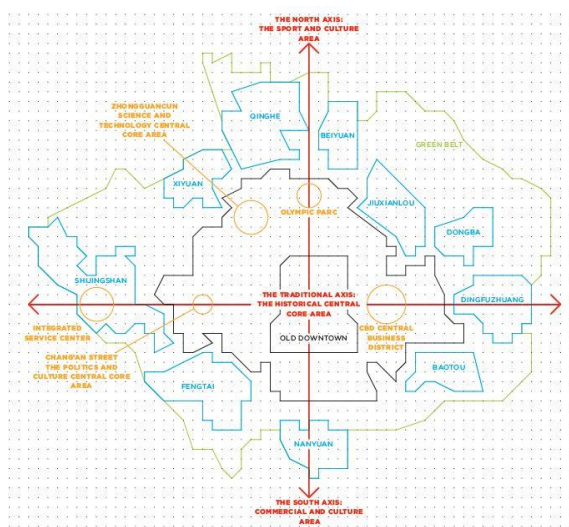
Source: Barthes (1982: 31)

Conversely, Lefebvre (1991) does underline the role of power in Eastern urban centrality. In this sense he addresses the 'cross-ruled' central voids of the Asian town and emphasises its combined religious and political character defined, "rationally from the outset" (Lefebvre, 1991: 155). Drawing on further contributions, Lefebvre identifies these central spaces as 'full' signifiers of divinity, wisdom, and power which, seen from western eyes, appear as 'oppressive' spaces since politics, and the State, in modern societal terms are no longer a mix of spirituality, knowledge and power (Lefebvre,

1991: 156ff). In other words what Lefebvre acknowledges as an instrument of authoritarianism is the structural endurance of pre-modern urban centrality in the eastern world.

This phenomenon is analysed by Hassenpflug (2010) in China where traditional “linear centrality with hierarchically structured spatial successions” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 21) dominates and informs space production within capital cities of imperial founding such as Beijing, Xi’an, Nanjing or Hangzhou. In this sense, the pre-modern linear arrangement of signifiers rooted in ancient values influences up to the present day Chinese urbanism in spite of strong historic events within the last one hundred years such as Republic, Maoism and current strong globalisation forces. Hassenpflug describes this type of urban centrality as an ensemble rooted in cosmological laws arranged and oriented according to spiritual aspects where the “omnipresence of imperial power” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 68) plays a major role. It is composed of a north-south axis and an east-west axis that intersects in the very city centre in accordance to a linear spatial hierarchy which influences function, meaning, size, location of urban elements. According to Hassenpflug, this complex configuration still “allows the centralistically legitimized, ‘hypermoral’ or ‘papaistic’ and thus strictly hierarchically organized Chinese society [...] to spatially reflect and recognise itself in an adequate way” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 69).

Fig. 12. Beijing’s “Great Cross”

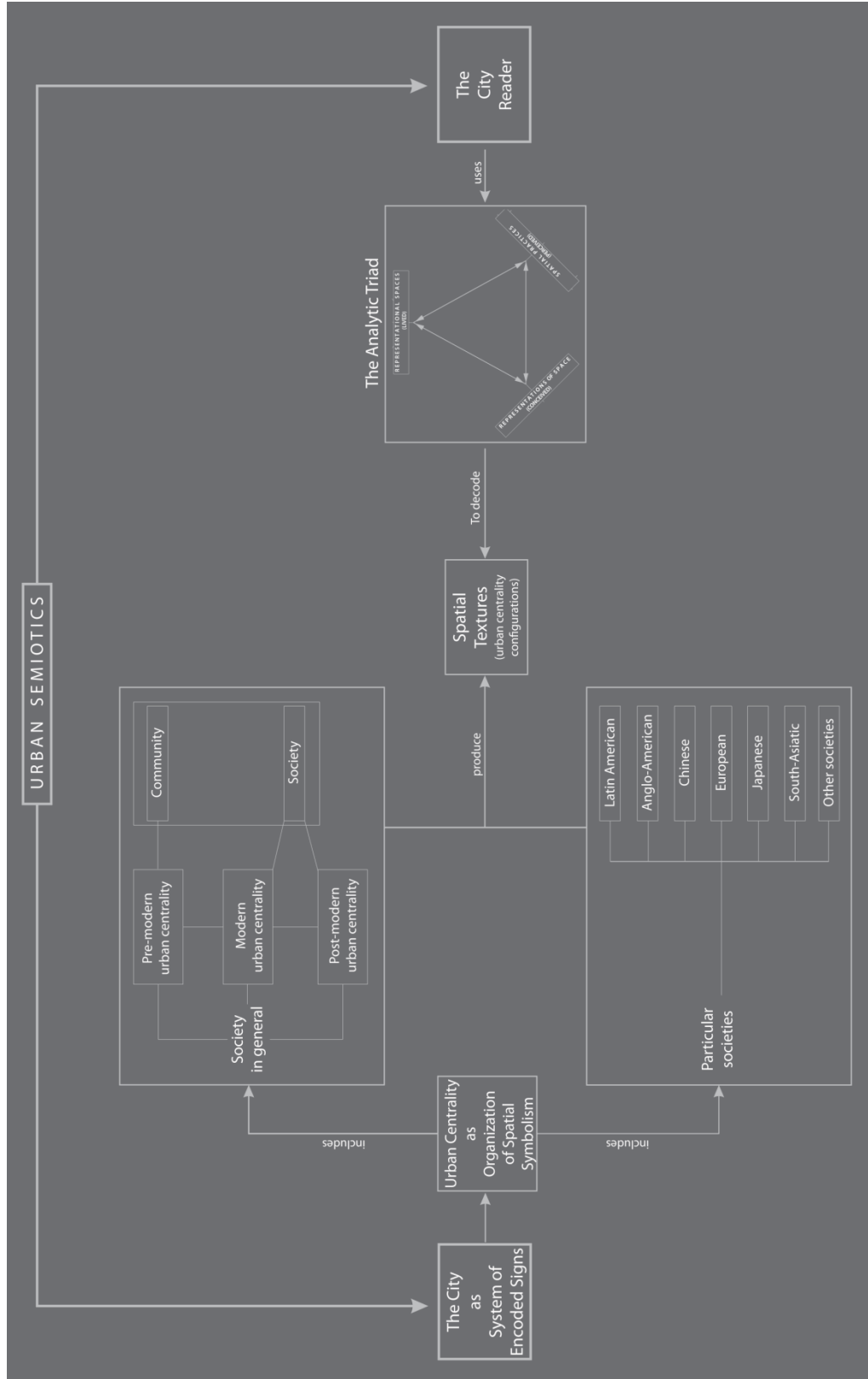


Source: Hassenpflug (2010: 70)

Moreover, this spatial feature appears also as an unavoidable aspect to introduce big scale urban interventions. For instance, the north-south axis (the dragon axis) in Beijing became a precondition to place the 2008 Olympic Games facilities. This huge intervention was “almost naturally” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 69) developed along and on the northern part of this axis which was the beginning of a process of elongation and revitalisation of this traditional organising element. Likewise, but with an opposite aim, the construction of the huge Tian An Men square ordered by Mao Zedong flanked with buildings with political meaning was placed also ‘rather naturally’ in the southern part of the axis, yet as an: “...antithesis strong enough to offer resistance to the symbolic presence of the enclosed complex of the imperial palace, but also to reorder the central-spatial hierarchy by interrupting its spatial sequence” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 69). Accordingly, the east-west axis appears also as a strong determinant for the location of big capitals (in the form of C.B.D.-like spaces) and urban planning strategies defined from the 1990s onwards. However, the ‘Great Cross’, as Beijing’s primary spatial sign of centrality, prevails functionally and symbolically over strong intentions to introduce foreign symbols such as an American-style C.B.D. to define the gateway of the capital of the new China.

The figure shown below summarises the main contents of chapters one and two. This figure illustrates the field of ‘urban semiotics’ as the general interpretative framework. In this sense, the city is defined as a ‘system of encoded signs’ open to the structural interpretation of the ‘reader’. From this perspective, ‘urban centrality’ refers to the organisation of spatial symbolism which is a definition that applies to both, society in general and particular societies. ‘Spatial textures’ are products of these two societal levels. We refer to spatial creations that can be decoded through the ‘analytic triad’ which is a tool for the enquiry of the semiotic dimension of complex spatial facts. This schematic illustration leads also to chapters three and four, which deal with the research strategies and the methods used in the field, and the state of the art. Thus, key categories of the analytic triad and macro-sociological concepts (e.g. ‘representations of space’, ‘Latin American urban culture’, etc.) are used to outline the main characteristics of the case study and problematize the existing approaches to the spatial structure of Latin American cities.

Fig. 13. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. Own elaboration



Source:  
Own elaboration



### 3. Reflections on methodology

This chapter presents the strategies and the methods used in the field. The text exposes, on the one hand, the conditions of the selection of an “instrumental case study,” (Stake, 2008) in relation to a critical appraisal of previous analysis based on multiple cases; and on the other hand, the ways in which the theoretical framework was applied. This chapter entails the description of an exploratory, and a more structured and theory-oriented phase that allowed for the systematisation of a great amount of data.

#### 3.1. Bogotá as case study

This research applies urban semiotics as a method of qualitative inquiry and uses the instrumental case study<sup>20</sup> of Bogotá to “redraw generalizations” (Stake, 2008: 123) about the meanings of spatial structures of Latin American cities. The reference is a state of the art about urban centrality in Latin America where Bogotá appears as a recurrent sample of analysis. This approach aims at recovering the complexity and contradictions of socio-spatial processes, and interrogating previous analyses. Particularly, those analyses based on the strategy of collective case study and the theories of “modernization and dependent urbanization” (Almandoz, 2008; Gorelik, 2006; Jaramillo, 1993). In this sense, we overcome reductionisms and determinisms that blur the understanding of the permanence and transformation of spatial structures and their signification, and in this manner further develop a socio-cultural hermeneutics of urban space in Latin America.

The selection of Bogotá as instrumental case study was defined within the process of gathering theoretical and empirical data. At first the analysis of urban centrality in Latin America was conceived from a comparative analysis of several cases. The fieldwork in 2009 and 2010 in different Latin American cities such as Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, Córdoba (Argentina) and Bogotá was carried out through using direct and indirect observation, photo documentation, literature review, expert interviews and participation in academic events<sup>21</sup>. This work involved the analysis of

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<sup>20</sup> See description of this case study typology and its relation to the semiotic method in Chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> This field work was financially supported by the *Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst* (KAAD) within the doctoral scholarship granted in 2009. It included interviews with Dr. Wiley Ludeña, Prof. Pablo Vega Centeno (*Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú*) Prof. Roberto Moris, Prof. Rodrigo Salcedo (*Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*), Prof. Mario Forné (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba) and attendance at a lecture given by Prof. Carlos de Mattos (*Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*) in Lima organised by the *Colegio de Arquitectos del Perú* on current spatial development of Latin

texts on structural urban models, urban history and analysis of current phenomena. Hence, we also considered spatial descriptions of other scholars which assisted in the selection of cities to be visited, interviewees and delimitation of observable areas in each city.

Although the exploratory phase confirmed particularities within each city, there are numerous evident similarities in reference to location patterns, character and temporality of central spaces as well as related shifts in the configuration of decision-making spaces i.e. cores of power within main metropolitan areas. Additionally, this research phase allowed for the identification of common problematic issues addressed by academics in terms of: extensive privatization, land use de-regularization, exclusion and fragmentation; all of which are connected to the generalization of spatial products such as C.B.D.s, malls, and gated communities. These convergences in analytical, social, functional and morphological terms revealed that in order to question and redraw on previous concepts connected to urban centrality in the region it was more productive to pursue a single case from an alternative conceptual and interpretative framework without disregarding contextual circumstances. Therefore, the semiotic approach proposed in this dissertation contributes to the debate on Latin American urban milieu, and intends to open the field to future, in-depth semiotic studies of other metropolises.

Within this context, Bogotá appears as a case with great potential to problematize spatial structures and their interpretation. Primarily, Bogotá presents a series of contradictions that become a resource to ‘decentre’ the attention on the ‘more developed’ cities of the subcontinent. One of these contradictions is the early appearance and increasing generalization in Bogotá of, the so-called, “artefacts of globalization” (de Mattos, 2002) e.g. malls, corporative headquarters, etc. in spite that this city is the main centre of one of the most enclosed and conservative societies in political, economic and cultural terms in Latin American social history (Kalmanovitz & López, 2006; Romero, 2004; Guillén, 1979). In this sense, Bogotá’s spatial re-structuring processes turn into a challenging issue to wrestle with, not only with the functional, but also the semiotic level of spatial analysis. Another inconsistency is that

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American cities. Additionally I held informal conversations with Arch. Rosa Arari and a guided field work with her in inner and outer areas of Córdoba (Argentina). Additionally, the involvement in the international congress titled *La ciudad como patrimonio: historia urbanística de las ciudades latino americanas* organized by the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Argentina) allowed the researcher of this study to exchange ideas with other speakers and participants of the Latin American context and further develop the state of the art. Activities developed in Bogotá will be described further below.

Bogotá, as one of the primary illustration references needed to develop categories that transcend state boundaries within Latin America<sup>22</sup>, has been replaced in later research for cities such as Buenos Aires, Santiago and Mexico City. In other words, the case of Bogotá has been removed from these discussions, and at the same time national debates about the Colombian cities remain detached from the analysis of wider historical and socio-cultural processes and spatial structures.

Secondly, the enquiry into the case of the Colombian capital emerges as an opportunity to develop a required historical reconstruction of its spatial configuration. This requirement refers to two aspects. On the one hand, a true “informative” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 20) structural semiosis demands to take possession of the history of the object of study which assists in the deciphering of the signals transmitted by its components and structure. This involves the identification and systematic selection and analysis of historical facts and socio-spatial dynamics which are dispersed throughout numerous sources of information that address previous socio-spatial events and facts according to different epistemological approaches and specialized disciplines e.g. social history, urban planning, architecture and design, political economy, etc. On the other hand, comprehensive appraisals of the city’s history are almost non-existent. The existent appraisals tend to be purely descriptive or isolate, within the analysis, a specific city core of Bogotá’s spatial structure. We particularly refer to the works of Zambrano et al. (2009) and Perilla (2008) that do not involve a socio-historical nor semiotic approach which has been developed in the present study. In reference to Perilla’s work, there is no consideration of the relational nature of urban centrality. This aspect refers to the systemic configuration of centres and sub-centres, and therefore, the study of Perilla finds limitations to enlighten the socio-spatial shifts that have occurred within its area of analysis i.e. the crossroad composed by the *Avenida Jiménez* and the *Carrera Séptima*. Conversely, there are numerous sources which treat specific periods in depth (e.g. the colonial phase, 19th century, first half or the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century) that becomes a useful resource to bridge historical gaps.

Last, but not least, the access to the field was particularly advantageous in the case of Bogotá because the researcher lived and studied architecture and urban design in this city from 1998 to 2004. This condition facilitated the planning, access and data

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<sup>22</sup> See the work of Amato (1970a/1970b) early revised by Bähr & Mertins (1995) and Borsdorf (2002).

gathering which boosted the available budget. In addition, the previous experience as city-user and an academic contact with urban and architectural issues became social capital to get into the field and obtain complementary material for the analysis. However, this condition required also a process of “making the familiar strange” (Marradi et al., 2007). This was a process supported by previous academic and professional experience as a city planner and designer in Austria, Germany and China from 2005 to 2008, respectively. At the same time this process of ‘denaturalization’ of the current structures and spatial dynamics of the case study were reinforced through the parallel definition of the critical theoretical and conceptual framework described above. The development of this set of categories not only included rigorous literature review, but also the supervision of my advisor, Prof. Dr. Dieter Hassenpflug, the attendance to lectures and seminars at the *Bauhaus-Universität Weimar* (Institute for European Urban Studies - IfEU), the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena* (Institute of Geography) and the *Technische Universität Berlin*.

Finally, the co-operation in different academic and informal scenarios between fellow Latin American scholarship holders of the *Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst* (KAAD) and further researchers that I met daily at the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* in Berlin contributed to develop an alternative and critical posture towards the case of Bogotá. This process entailed also daily experience in Bogotá towards the end of the research. This involved teaching in local universities which became an instrument to consolidate and confront findings as well as the socialization of contents and methods. Academic activities were developed at the *Universidad del Rosario* (School of Human Sciences), the *Universidad de La Salle* (Faculty of Sciences of the Habitat) and the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana* (Faculty of Architecture and Design) from 2014 to 2016 in Bogotá and included courses and workshops related to research in urban studies, urban semiotics, history, theory and urban design in both, graduate and postgraduate levels.

### **3.2. Applying the analytic triad**

“Accessing the signifiers” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 140) that configure Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration was a process composed by a semi-structured and a structured phase. The development of these phases defined the time frame of the analysis from the origins of the city’s spatial structure i.e. 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the

2000s i.e. around 2010. These temporal limits were set according to two aspects: first, the required understanding of sense making processes within the city's formative phase which were not sufficiently discussed in secondary sources; and second, the period in which fieldwork was more intensely developed in relation to contemporary state-of-the-art texts published at the beginning and towards the end of the decade<sup>23</sup>.

The semi-structure phase consisted in classifying the indirect observations related to the structural urban model mentioned above, and contrasting them to primary sources gathered in the field. The collecting of those primary sources was relatively exploratory and interrelated the researcher's observations to people's perceptions in the street and local expert's opinions. This procedure allowed, on the one hand, to generate certain level of independence from the indirect observations previously revised, and on the other hand, to keep certain boundaries of observation delineated in previous texts related to Bogotá's spatial structure, *citybildung* dynamics, etc. As a result, we prevented the repetition of data contained in state-of-the-art texts and, at the same time, strategically gathered information of Bogotá's essential spatial elements and processes in a relatively short period of time.

Our observations initially focused on traditional and newer city quarters. Within the traditional areas we encountered the juxtaposition of dissimilar realities. Practically within walking distance it was possible to experience 'opposed city cores' in terms of their spatial aesthetics, appropriation practices, urban functions, etc. For example, one of the visits we made started in a vertical C.B.D whose offices, shops and residences are used by middle and upper-middle class sectors that enjoy national and international franchises (hotels, restaurants, etc.). Next to it, there was a much lower central quarter partly occupied by governmental offices but that was mainly characterised by retail, wholesale and many services used by popular sectors. This core appeared as a merge of a popular market and junk shops accompanied by further amenities (e.g. banking, technical institutions) which were located in deteriorated buildings that are typical of the 1950s and 1960s. We also observed a cluster of book shops and electrical appliances, accessories, etc. as well as a highly stigmatised area where activities such as drugs and weapon sales take place next to a traditional church, the headquarters of the metropolitan police and an army building. Walking a few streets from there we visited a

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<sup>23</sup> We particularly refer to the texts of Bähr (2006) and Segre (1999).



Inner and outer  
"functional cores"



Upper-class  
business districts



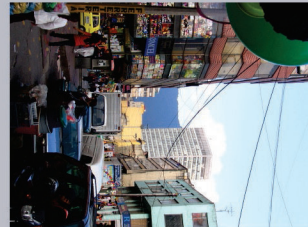
Traditional centre



Middle and upper-middle  
class vertical C.B.D.



Nearby popular centre.  
Retail and wholesales



Aerial view of popular  
centre and stigmatized area

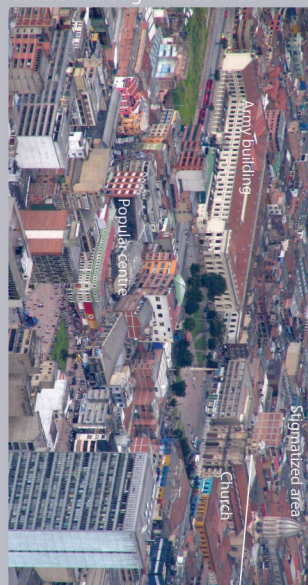


Fig. 14. Exploratory observations of city cores. Source: own elaboration

core that can be considered Bogotá's and Colombia's political centre. This traditional centre is characterised by a typical colonial layout that organises spatially banks, universities, public institutions and open spaces framed by religious monuments and governmental buildings that feature diverse architectural styles. Within this core, we experienced crowded streets and noticed the presence of many beggars as well as low and middle sectors of the population. In addition, we sometimes observed upper class people coming in and out of institutional buildings and also spending time in nearby coffee shop franchises that are located next to popular cafés and restaurants.

These observations changed radically in walks through other city cores of Bogotá that are distant from the traditional or old quarters. The daily routines in these places appeared dominated by upper and middle social sectors which are involved in private health services, financial and diplomatic activities, among others. These central spaces were in some parts very dense and featured bustling construction activities. They were characterised by wide avenues or motorways, apartment buildings and recent corporative architecture which define C.B.D-like spaces. When we left the city's densest areas, the spatial references were 'functional cores' located in central as well as peripheral sectors. These cores often combined formal and informal bus terminals, crowded shopping centres, supermarkets and motorways that mixed-up all means of transport (e.g. animal traction, cars, busses, trucks, etc.) and provided access to many kind of gated communities, residential compounds, industrial parks, etc.

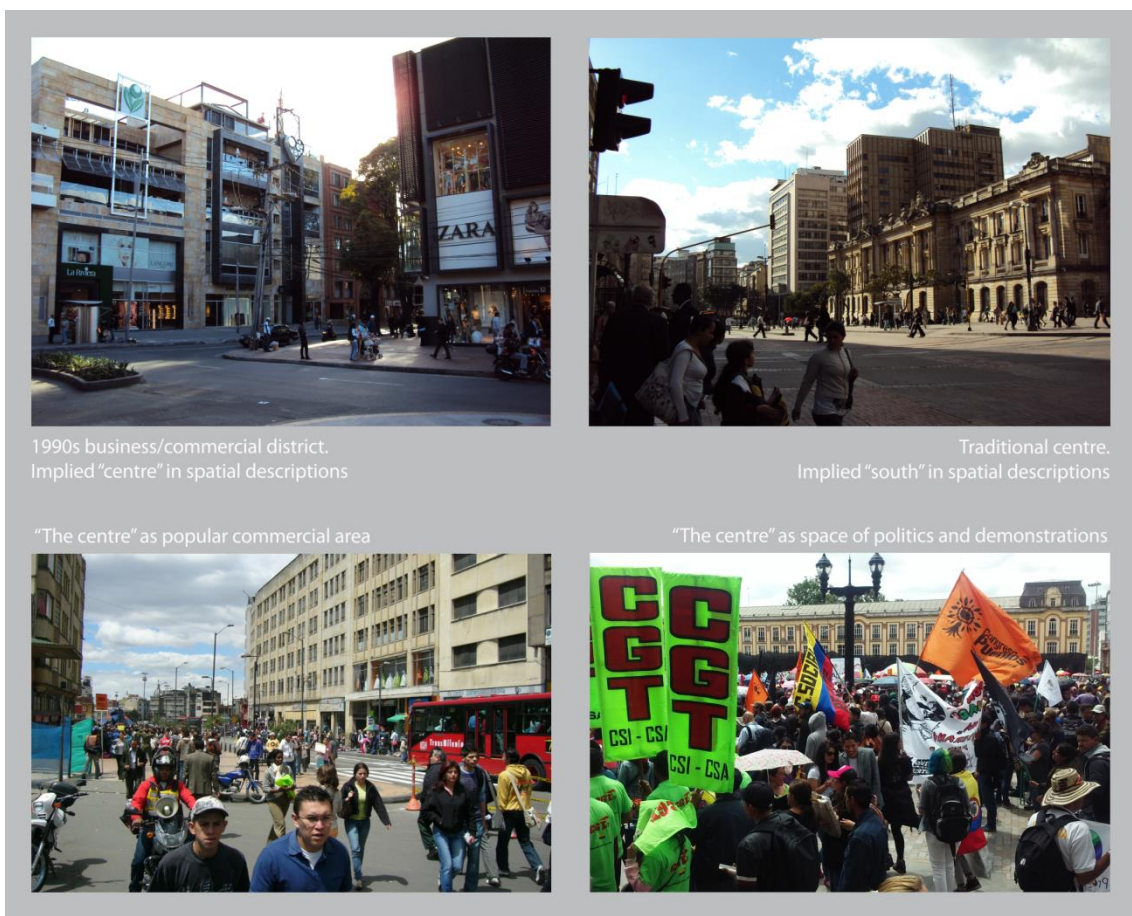
We summarised the direct observations and the photo documentation of this set of heterogeneous and mutually exclusive arrangement of peripheral and inner city cores in relation to informal street interviews, recorded oral descriptions and written notes. These observations included the enquiry into the senses triggered by city cores in order to outline a general idea of the legibility of the city's spatial structure. Thus, we focus on the people's 'mental representations' and 'symbolic generalizations' of urban centrality defined through 'signs of place' like real estate signs, tourist advertising (guides, flyers, etc.) and publicity of official projects in strategic areas of the city, etc.

A result of this research strategy was that the heterogeneity and fragmented character observed were reflected in the city users' divergent connotations of urban centrality. For instance, a middle class real estate agent, who works for an architectural firm located in a business and commercial district that was developed within an upper



class neighbourhood in the 1990s, connoted the area historically identified as ‘the centre’ as the distant ‘south of the city’, a notion commonly used by dominant media to refer to an extended backward and socially downgraded zone of Bogotá. Following this mental representation, such remote southern zone contains, in fact, the nation’s main ‘monuments’ and institutions, the hegemonic universities of the country as well as a vast offer of commercial services. By contrary, a housemaid who works in a northern upper middle class neighbourhood identified ‘the centre’ of the city as the area where she has her second job i.e. a small popular shop located in the plinth level of a corporate building that frames an avenue which thirty years ago was characterised by the presence of the headquarters of the main financial institutions and economic associations of the country. For some students of a public university, the very centre of the city is the foundational square framed by the State’s main institutions where they usually go to take part of demonstrations (see fig. 15).

Fig. 15. Connotations of urban centrality (Photos fieldworks 2009 and 2016)



Source: Own elaboration



The gathering of these connotations prepared the ground to register the spatial discourses of ‘privileged actors’, particularly those involved in city planning. This was done through unstructured and semi-structured expert interviews needed to outline ‘urban imaging’ processes connected to patterns and dynamics of urban centrality arrangements. This outline included the way in which academics as well as high and middle rank public officers of the city’s planning department identified main central areas, their relationships and the key actors involved in everyday spatial practices e.g. commuting, zoning, concentration of labour power, etc. These public officers, who are mostly architects<sup>24</sup>, are involved in urban heritage, strategic spatial planning, mobility and infrastructure, land policy, urban renewal and real estate dynamics who provided a wide range of official reports, figures, maps, texts, etc. in each of their areas of expertise<sup>25</sup>.

The outcome was in a way quite similar to the perceptions of the people asked in the street. A general fragmentation in the interpretation of the configuration of the city’s structure and its dynamics emerged in each interview. We observed neither common references of what the ‘centre is’ nor shared ideas of what the centre ‘should be’. This condition means the absence of a general or leading ‘image’ of urban centrality that could connect the past, present and future of Bogotá<sup>26</sup>. Thus, the spatial discourse of ‘urban planning’, as institution, falls in a series of strong contradictions connected to the “structure of knowledge and power” (Sardar & Van Loon, 2010: 14) on urban centrality and its dynamics. This is revealed through several representations of space.

For instance, the director of strategic urban projects (*Planes Parciales*) asserted in the interview that the State has nothing to do and should not intervene in urban design processes, hence in imaginary and conceptual processes of space which involve the spatialization of functions, morphology, signification, etc. According to this public officer, design in general is purely subjective and the intervention of the public sphere in it only delays the economic activity in the private sector who really possess the

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<sup>24</sup> Some of them have also certain academic background on planning or policy making.

<sup>25</sup> The interviewees were: Econ. Alex Smith Araque, Arch. Daniel Cerón, Arch. Fernando Roa, Arch. Javier Cárdenas, Arch. Javier Neira, Arch. Mauricio de los Ríos, Arch. Sandra Samacá, Arch. Tatiana Plazas and Arch. Oscar Pérez. The interviews were about an hour long each and made in 2010.

<sup>26</sup> In this context we understand ‘image’ as an instrumental cultural product i.e. as *matériel* (see reflections on this issue in chapter 1.2.). This approach to urban imaging processes is familiar to the notion of ‘imagination’ as “the reformulation of the remembered with the methods of the present” (Hassenpflug, 2001). As Hassenpflug (2001) notes this connection of the past, present and future is marked by W. Benjamin “in the medium of the dream”.

experience (and therefore the authority) to intervene in the city's spatial configuration. Additionally, processes and outcomes related to *citybildung*, like expansion of services or formation of new nodes, etc. are either seen as impossible to shape/control or as an issue outside of the State's judgment or jurisdiction. In this context, for many public officers the role of planning is to define a sort of 'normative coherence' between the emergence of spontaneous phenomena of 'centrality' and land policy in order to 'consolidate' i.e. legalise existing tendencies and facilitate private investments, and therefore, 'development'. Thus, most of the so-called 'planned centralities' (sub-centres) of a recent polycentric schema are, in fact, already exist cores. These cores are seen as focal points to be boosted in economic terms (see Fig. 95). As an exception, the introduction of public facilities (*equipamientos*) are conceptualised as potential trendsetting elements but their symbolic representation and functional performance are far from being considered as a structural means to (re)shape the spatial configuration of the city.

This evident discourse of spatial de-regulation contrasts with the current normative context aimed at re-gaining control over urban processes after two decades of flexible policies (end of 1970s to 1990s) via urban planning at the national level and its prime symbolic representations e.g. the promotion of 'balanced cities'<sup>27</sup>. This contradiction was reinforced when, during the interviews, a number of consultancies hired by the planning department proved to be useless, particularly a set of studies which were developed to determine the city's number of sub-centres, and to characterise the transformation of its spatial hierarchy. When asked about one of these studies, a public officer was very engaged in describing the contents and debating whether the spatial hierarchy of the city has been 'distributed' or 'displaced' during the last decades in order to picture a decentralizing schema. Yet, this enthusiastic approach to the issue was combined with a strong feeling of impotence upon recognizing the ineffectiveness of those analyses in a context of 'lack of political will' to run structural interventions (e.g. the encouragement of polycentricism) and tackle a set of 'irrationalities' in regard to urban centrality such as the geographical divergence of optimal accessibility conditions, the geographic location of the highest land prices and connectivity to main transport infrastructure.

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<sup>27</sup> Spatial planning from the 2000s onwards has been called the new era of planning in Colombia mainly directed through the figure called *Planes de Ordenamiento Territorial* (POT).

Fig. 16. 'Spatial irrationalities'  
(According to expert's description in 2009)



Source: Own elaboration

A further level of fragmentation emerged when the semiotic dimension of urban centrality was considered. The contents of official documents and the interviews made in the city planning department suggested that the state's ascription of meaning to particular elements or arrangements of the urban system (e.g. historical buildings, neighbourhoods, public spaces, etc.) appears as a peripheral practice within the master plans' guidelines. This means that history and identity emerged as secondary topics and were generally reduced to a geographical unit called 'historic centre' whose management is delegated to particular heritage organisations. The link between meaning and urban centrality within high rank official planning was either neglected or reduced to problems like socio-spatial decay within the former colonial core. This situation persisted during interviews in spite of the efforts of the researcher to open up the subject and enquire into the socio-cultural dimension of the issue. Hence, the relationship between spatial meanings and the city's spatial components and structure (beyond the traditional idea of the historic centre) seemed to be somehow ignored or 'removed' from experts' agendas and representations of space. As a result, the general image that we

constructed from the spatial interpretations of the interviewees was an arrangement defined by a ‘container of the past’ i.e. the city’s original centre that is somehow ‘inserted’ into an urban territory that is mostly appraised from socio-economic variables and profit-making terms<sup>28</sup>.

Therefore, we identified fragmentation within the three components of space production. Firstly, central spaces (seen as spatial signs) triggered varied and manifold senses. This was particularly evident when considering the notion of ‘the centre’ and the location of this space within the whole spatial arrangement. Secondly, spatial practices/perceptions involved a strong spatial divergence of functional aspects related to urban centrality (accessibility, connectivity, scarcity of space, land values, etc.). In addition there were contrasting characterizations of the centre-periphery relationship informed by the socio-cultural background, economic activity, etc., of city users. Additionally, representations of space appeared blurry and highly contradictory. This was mostly true for the establishing of the urban image within the public sector affected by the simultaneous validity among public officers of regulatory and de-regulatory spatial planning practices. This condition incorporated ambivalent postures towards diachronic or historic explanations of the city’s current urban centrality configuration.

The outline of such a contradictory and fragmented scenario led us to the second phase of the research. This phase initially consisted in accepting the idea that any city can be acknowledged as a ‘system of signs’ which broadcasts encoded signals which are open to interpretation. Within our approach the main spatial signs of urban systems are their centres and sub-centres whose arrangement presupposes a particular ‘logic of concentration’ that involves spatial meanings related to power and socio-spatial relations. These meanings are useful for the characterization of cities and reflection about possible planning and design actions.

In this sense, the general fragmentary and illegible condition of spatial structures identified in the exploratory phase was approached as ‘apparent’ and ‘opposed’ to the pathological or chaotic character implied in state-of-the-art texts<sup>29</sup>. This phase presupposed the formulation of the question: how was this fragmentary socio-spatial

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<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, a public officer regretted this fact but simultaneously validated the profit-making perspective asserting, with no more ado, that “it has to be done”.

<sup>29</sup> The problems and limits of existing approaches to spatial structures in Latin America will be revised in detailed in subsequent chapters.

condition produced and for what purpose? Thus, the attention was drawn to the identification of dominant space producers' practices in history and their relations to the configuration of city centres and sub-centres in Bogotá. In order to achieve this objective, the structural scheme of the tensions between 'community and society' was introduced as well as our urban centrality typology.

Consequently, a set of periods and sub-periods of urban centrality were identified. The notion of 'pre-modern urban centrality' assisted the delineation of three historical 'moments' and the subsequent analysis of the main tensions within the socio-spatial productive condition of 'community'. The three moments outlined a time frame of about 400 years. We revised primary as well as secondary sources on Bogotá's grounding morphology and socio-cultural history of Colombia and Latin America. This revision included contents from classical texts in the fields of Latin American urban culture and critical theory of Colombia's social structures. These contents were systematically analysed to make sense of urban processes and key spaces but were also used to bridge gaps in the city's (pre-modern) history. This connection was required for two reasons. On the one hand, the time span from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been much less studied than that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which has been exhaustively analysed in the academy. On the other hand, because generating a critical understanding of the grounding socio-spatial structures through those classic texts contributes to eliciting a possible alternative understanding of modernization processes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bogotá. These processes have been often treated as phenomena that started from scratch which disregards the role of pre-modern elements and structures in the configuration of succeeding spatial developments.

Subsequently, the notion of 'modern urban centrality' was applied in reference to the main characteristics of the spatial code implied in Bogotá's pre-modern urban centrality. This analysis required the explanation of numerous spatial contradictions observable within a myriad of data on urban history, planning, design and architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bogotá which included urban plans, photographs, aerial views of the city, written descriptions of urban spaces, etc. Such task was accomplished by focusing on the critical aspects of the ruling communitarian associative structure under modernization, and on the potential instrumentality of the maintenance and transformation of spatial structures and their meanings within these dynamics.

Thus, main socio-spatial strategies were identified according to processes of rationalization and specialization. This was achieved by drawing on the classical contributions already processed in the pre-modern phase of urban centrality. The analysis included the identification of shifts in spatial practices (new division of labour, social hierarchies, etc.) and the emergence of new specialized institutions in accordance to the understanding of Bogotá as the main socio-political centre of Colombian society and its urban centrality configuration as a crucial functional and semiotic *material* to ensure social reproduction and its spatial representation. Consequently, a synchronic analysis of the physical, functional and semiotic dimensions of urban morphology as well as an enquiry into signifying processes was developed. This analysis included the identification of emerging spatial concentration patterns' temporality and collective representations. Particular attention was paid to the role of 'symbolic generalizations' defined by privileged actors who appeared to have a great need to maintain overarching invariant spatial signs and get rid of other significant spaces. Thus, we addressed 'symbolic interpretations' and 'signs of place' within social conjunctures through a wide range of primary and secondary sources: on the one hand, historical newspaper articles, episodes of novels on urban conflicts and literary critiques, city marketing, etc.; and on the other hand, urban planning and design plans of approved and rejected projects for the city centre, postcards, plans, photos and illustrations made and published by the media<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, a highly complex crisis period of pre-modern urban centrality was defined. This included two sub-periods: first, a transit phase that developed within the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and second, a very dense sub-period characterised by the spatialization of the contradictory modernization of the dominant communitarian structure.

A key strategy in this spatialization was the use of modern city centre types (principally the C.B.D) and the creation of a condition of spatial fragmentation at the end of the period. The spatial reading of this phenomenon was assisted through the elaboration of 'spatial diagrams' in order to break the apparent illegible condition of spatial structures and summarize the outcomes of the semiotic analysis. According to Liszka's (1996: 37f) analysis of Peirce's typologies, a diagram is a type of icon and

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<sup>30</sup> Considering the complexity and extension of the time framed analysed, many primary sources were extracted from secondary data (e.g. Niño & Reina, 2010) which gathered many information of modernizing interventions in Bogotá's city centre, particularly from the 1940s to 1960.

therefore denotes meanings by means of ‘similarity’<sup>31</sup>. Within this principle, the processes of graphic representation of findings as well as the final schemas were based on ‘isomorphic relations’ which helped to interpret the semiotic relationships between spatial signs i.e. previous and new sub-centres and related elements e.g. urban axes. This principle was developed for the analysis of both, pre-modern and modern urban centrality which became a key resource to defined the “structural interrelation” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 142) of the content of the main signifiers that compose Bogotá’s spatial arrangement in the last moment of urban centrality.

Consequently, the notion of ‘post-modern urban centrality’ assisted the delineation and analysis of the last period. This delineation mainly referred to the identification of the transformations of the decision-making structure and their related spatial dynamics. Thus, the absence or presence of postmodern city centre types and reflexive practices/representations as well as their potential relations were addressed in the two strategies:

- Primarily, the systematic characterization of main spatial practices and representations through the triangulation of alternative secondary and primary sources. Besides the methodological advantage of this procedure, this strategy was carried out because representative texts of the fields of social history and urban culture developed from a structural/macro-sociological approach extinguished already in the 1980s due to an epistemological break<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the identification of dominant space producers, the understanding of re-structuring processes and the signifying processes ascribed to them had to be addressed from more specialized texts on political economy, recent urban and architectural history, spatial dynamics and planning, as well as the analysis of diverse primary sources. Among them, official reports of urban and architectural projects, urban development and heritage policies, proceedings of meetings of planning councils, consultancies reports, audit statements on urban renewal and revitalization, tourist material on private and public organisms, real estate journals, documentaries on urban renewal processes and mobility dynamics in the city (commuting, accessibility

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<sup>31</sup> For the author a typical example of diagrams are, in fact, that of ‘map to terrain’. Analogies also classify as diagrams since, “they show a parallel between relations in one thing to relations in another: A is to B as C is to D” (Liszka, 1996: 38).

<sup>32</sup> Critical approaches interpreted in this research like those of Romero (2004 [1976]) and Guillén (1979) can be inscribed within this rupture in intellectual production which Gorelik (2006) calls the culminating decade of the constructivist cycle of the “Latin American social imagination”. This issue will be addressed in chapter 4.

dynamics, etc.) urban marketing, newspaper articles on dominant actors' statements (e.g. mayoral discourses), spatial development and dynamics of developers' organizations; and finally web pages of dominant urban developer firms, economic conglomerates, associations of urban developers, "C.B.D" networks/associations, etc.

- Secondly, a direct observation of spatial signs supported by the analysis of primary sources. This observation entailed several activities. To begin with, observations made in the exploratory phase of the research were recaptured in the light of findings on the historical forces behind the social production of the city's spatial fragmentation. In this regard, there were new criteria to gather and analyse new sources such as aerial views taken by official institutions (e.g. the IGAC), graphic material of the city museum (Museo de Bogotá), web sites of public organizations (Bogotá's Institute of Cultural Heritage) and compilations of photographs made by local media and web sites specialized in geographical information worldwide<sup>33</sup>. This activity was developed to fill the gap of about 30 years between the beginnings of the 1980s and the end of the 2000s when most direct observations were made. This included further observations in 2015 in central spaces which at the beginning of the research were not carefully mapped. These activities did not represent a significant change in 'the sample' of analysis since many phenomena did not present a substantial change after five years i.e. the time between first observations and final conclusions. Hence this additional field work enriched the empirical data basis<sup>34</sup>.

Particular attention was paid to the location, nature and the spatial representation of emerging and foreign capitals in relation to the spatial structure inherited from the previous historical periods. Thus, there was an appraisal of the morphological and functional interrelations of pre-existing city centres (i.e. those produced under the associative and power relations of the previous period) and those developed under the new power and productive conditions which required the analysis of different material e.g. consultancies' reports on commuting dynamics, location of capitals, and land price variations in relation to observations of the new city cores in the field.

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<sup>33</sup> For example, [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com).

<sup>34</sup> That is the case of the area defined as political-C.B.D whose functional and social conditions remained in spite of some interventions developed in between 2010 and 2015 such as the introduction of a BRTS line and the renewal of one of its buildings promoted by the public sector.



These activities led to the identification of the last phase as a context characterised by the deepening of pre-existent tendencies and a highly conflictive reconfiguration of the power structure. The decoding of its main spatial outcome i.e. the ‘fragmented super-centre’ was supported in textual and graphic sub-conclusions presented in previous chapters as well as in a final spatial diagram aimed at communicating the ‘paradoxical integration’ of main spatial signifiers’ contents.



#### **4. The analysis of Latin American cities in socio-cultural perspective**

The understanding of Latin American cities as constituents of a cultural geography has involved different epistemological perspectives and research strategies. This can be identified when approaching key contributions that have focused on spatial structures to outline common spatial characteristics within the region to recognise the differences with other cultural-urban archipelagos.

The secondary sources revised in this project follow different schools of thought and apply conceptual frameworks that refer directly and indirectly to the notion of urban centrality to describe spatial structures. We refer to the works of Bähr (1995 / 2006), Mertins et al (1995) and Segre (1986). However, all these sources are associated to a crucial debate that developed from the 1950s to the 1980s which is the culminating decade of the constructivist cycle of the Latin American social imagination i.e. the Latin American project (Gorelik, 2006; Almandoz, 2008). During the last decades of this cycle, most prominent works about Latin American cities and culture appeared but rapidly lost their significance. According to Gorelik (2006), this scenario happened due to an ‘epistemological rupture’ in the subcontinent that led Latin American urban thinking to react against approaches that went beyond local or national boundaries. This rupture took place in accordance with two general aspects: first, the international conjuncture at the end of the 1970s that entailed the collapse of the ideas of ‘planning’ and ‘revolution’ which were connected to the welfare state and the construction of Latin America as a unified region; and second, the influence of the general cultural turn and the postmodern debate which emphasised the individual analysis of cities according to global market dynamics (Gorelik, 2006: 24f). The general outcome was the generalization of intrinsic case studies without reference to theories of cultural city types, which included a strong rejection of the original debate due to its “ideological determinism” and “excessive generalization” (Gorelik, 2006).

The presence of determinisms and excessive generalizations can be recognised in numerous studies on the Latin American cities, including the contributions discussed in this research project. Nevertheless, two points have to be considered accordingly. Primarily, the fall into determinisms and extreme generalizations is a potential risk that is present within any enquiry. Secondly, an explanatory characterisation of city types

can be achieved by connecting the three layers of urban analysis and by focusing on the semiotic dimension of space described in our theoretical and conceptual framework.

In this regard we highlight the idea that cities can be approached as both, specific symbolic entities that develop “intrinsic logics” (Löw, 2012/2013) and as significant constituents of “cultural geographies” (Hassenpflug, 2011). From our theoretical framework, these constituents are created through socio-spatial practices that are (re)produced in time and surpass local processes of sense making as well as political or physical boundaries of individual spatial agglomerations.

The general framework of the analysis of urban space in Latin America suggests that in order to ascertain analytic flaws and knowledge gaps, it is necessary not only to expose the ideas presented by Bähr, Mertins and Segre about spatial structures in the region, but to also trace the dialogue between the authors’ theoretical bases. Thus the following chapter focuses on the interpretative fields of urban space in Latin America to define a reference to better comprehend the existing research on the topic.

#### **4.1. Interpretative fields of urban space in Latin America**

It is possible to identify three classical fields of interpretation of spatial development in Latin America: first, “the theory of marginality and modernisation” (Jaramillo, 1993; Gorelik, 2006) which is revised from the “theory of dependent urbanization” (Jaramillo, 1993; Almandoz, 2008) that emerges as a critical theoretical body of the modernization approach. And third, the field of “Latin American urban culture” (Gorelik, 2006) which stands for an alternative perspective that theoretically and methodologically revised the mainstream debate composed by the two initial theories.

The theory of marginality and modernisation is inspired by the positivist urban sociology developed in North America during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It constituted the intellectual framework of the political agenda of the Latin American region that was powered by multinational organizations and international events<sup>35</sup> (Gorelik, 2006: 14; Jaramillo, 1993: 13). According to Jaramillo (1993: 16f) the theory

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<sup>35</sup> It is worth mentioning that among them the following institutions which up to the present are significant within the region: ECLAC - The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean / *Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)*, the SIAP - *Sociedad interamericana de planificación*, the Latin American council of social sciences - *Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO)* and UNESCO.

of marginality and modernisation reworks the principles of the ‘rural-urban continuum’ in order to explain a phenomenon defined as the ‘ruralization of cities’ whose origins are traced back to the 1930s<sup>36</sup>. This approach meant that the free, linear and normal transit of social groups from ‘tradition’ (backward, rural) to ‘modernity’ (developed, urban) was obstructed through different kinds of ‘cultural barriers’ rooted in traditional practices seen as anachronisms. This reasoning ended up characterising the cities of the subcontinent as “pathological” (Gorelik, 2006: 17) entities and their research as the diagnosis of anomalies which included particular terms such as ‘hyper-urbanization’, *macrocefalia* (urban primacy), etc. This approach to the urban phenomenon involved that several aspects that were expected to operate as ‘developer’ engines such as demographic growth or the increase of density i.e. ‘ecological variables’ of urban configurations did not work in a proper manner. This lack of ‘performance’ was explained according to the persistence of communitarian characteristics (e.g. kinship, big families, non-commercial forms of consumption, etc.) that were seen as the cause of the expansion of ‘rural sections’ of built space in the cities i.e. slums.

In this context, Jaramillo (1993) identifies that there is a particular explanation within this field of analysis which consists in that the modernizing effect is annulled because urbanization in the Latin American context has taken place mostly by ‘external induction’. The results of such induction are firstly, a rapid growth of activities of urban nature that have not experienced a difficult inner development process, and secondly, a strong contrast of cities with non-urban environments that feature a much more traditional profile than in other world regions. Consequently, this situation ends up generating a strong attraction towards cities which is expressed by huge migrations that cause rapid growth and marginal population<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Among the numerous authors that can be ascribed to this theoretical approach, it is possible to mention here Robert Redfield (Theory of folk-urban continuum), Oscar Lewis (The culture of poverty) and Philip Hauser and Leo Schnore (The study of urbanization).

<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Jaramillo (1993: 17ff) indicates that it is possible to identify two lines of argumentation within this explanatory framework which have illuminated ideological representations until present. Such lines are defined according to the explanation of the sources of the mentioned ‘cultural barriers’ and arrive to several political conclusions. The first line is attached to a pure ecological determinism that has historically led, on the one hand, to the physical removal of rural redoubts codified as backwardness and poverty, and on the other hand, to the relocation of its inhabitants into (modern) social housing in order to adapt the socio-cultural characteristics of these marginal groups to a truly modern urban society. The quick adoption of this theory and its development as a legitimating project is explained by the ideological needs of the industrial bourgeoisie that headed the period of industrialization in most countries of the region. Thus, the author concludes that the modernisation of cities and the search for their symbolic coherence with the idea of progress became the physical constitution of this discourse. The second one

According to Jaramillo (1993: 21), this notion of ‘marginality’ and the connotation of traditional practices as stubborn cultural obstacles becomes the point of reference for the theory of dependent urbanization to revise the ‘modernisation’ approach. The dependency perspective questions the understanding of marginality in relation to tradition and sees this condition as the development of exceeding social layers (i.e. social layers that cannot proletarianise) that are subjected to misery because of precarious conditions that obligate them to accept very low wages within a very competitive context<sup>38</sup>. Consequently, the different ‘anomalies’ featured by the cities of the subcontinent are conceptualised as outcomes of general societal characteristics. Particularly, ‘the urban’ is addressed as a process attached to basic elements of social structures articulated with the accumulation process of economic, political and ideological capital which in the Latin American context is strongly informed by economic exploitation and political oppression.

Thus, the dependent urbanization approach sets a periodicity according to the evolution of the correspondence between forms of dependency and spatial configurations which means that the Latin American region is unified through the perspective of “imperialism”<sup>39</sup> (Jaramillo, 1993: 21; Almandoz, 2008: 164). There are two main principles within the different urban phases in Latin America: first, that the spatial structures of dependent countries obey functions of dispossession and oppression exercised by central countries, and secondly, that the asymmetry between countries of

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maintains a very similar theoretical base but falls into a series of contradictions. In this case, the existence of rural islands in the cities appears as the product of meanness of privileged sectors of society and the inoperability of the State (that eventually enters into conflict with powerful private interests) which is not able to rescue the groups trapped in marginal conditions. Therefore, this line of argumentation demands equality by means of education and political participation of marginal groups, yet, understanding slums i.e. *urbanización popular* as an ingenious way of solving very adverse conditions, a strong mechanism of social mobility and adaptation of migrants to the city which exceeds the state’s social housing since it makes funding more flexible, while also taking advantage of an abundant labour force provided by the marginal groups themselves and better fits their cultural structures. The political outcome therefore can be seen in the general promotion of these spaces by means of provision of infrastructures and other measures related to the encouragement of *autoconstrucción* (self-build) and rationalization of state actions.

<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the official encouragement of *autoconstrucción* tends to perpetuate this situation since it releases the state and capital from this component of the cost of reproduction of the labour force. This means, on the one hand, the reduction of wages even at the cost of the extension of the working day, and on the other hand, the resignation to live in precarious residential standards that entail primitive building techniques (Jaramillo, 1993: 23f).

<sup>39</sup> Almandoz (2008: 164) and Jaramillo (1993: 44) coincide in pointing out that the texts that represent better this spatial variant of the theory of dependency are Manuel Castells’ “*Imperialismo y urbanización en América Latina*” and Marta Scheingart’s “*Urbanización y dependencia en América Latina*”. Emphasis on social and political factors were mostly developed in Marcos Kaplan’s “*La ciudad latinoamericana como factor de transición de control socioeconómico y político externo durante el periodo contemporáneo*” and in Anibal Quijano’s “*Dependencia, urbanización y cambio social en Latinoamérica*”.

the Latin American region is reproduced within each country between central and peripheral sections of each national territory. Therefore, besides an external colonialism, there is an internal colonialism.

Consequently, three phases are identified by Jaramillo (1993: 20ff): the colonial dependency, the commercial dependency and the 'Import Substitution Industrialization' (ISI) period or 'neo-colony'. The first phase was developed from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is when the Latin American territories were part of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. During this phase, spatial structures responded to the extraction of surplus via taxes, tributes and supply of key agricultural and mineral commodities. As a result, the urban network expands notoriously but remains weak since the surplus that stays in the region only allows minor urban magnitudes and precarious conditions in terms of services and communication.

The second phase is the commercial dependency (or semi-colony) that is framed from the beginnings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s. Hence this period is defined by the dissolution of the Spanish empire in Latin America, the increasing autonomy of Portuguese colonies, and the global economic recession of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The political independence is counteracted by subordination in economic terms of peripheral countries. This subordination consisted of the specialisation of production of raw materials and agricultural products and their uneven exchange for manufactured goods made in the new metropolises. This condition meant the unfavourable insertion into the international division labour developed during industrial capitalism.

The third period features two phases. The first one started in the 1930s with the crisis of commercial dependency which consisted of the shortage of manufactured goods imported from central countries due to the economic crisis and the second war world; and the second is characterized by the recovery of the imperialist capital from the second post-war period onwards. Within such recovery the foreign capital invades the most dynamic sectors of investment with its huge financial power and, in so doing, displaces national capital or obligates it to associate in a subordinate position.

In this context, 'hyper-urbanization' and 'urban primacy' are identified as irregular socio-spatial characteristics or distortions connected to several aspects: a sudden demographic uprising produced by fast improvements of sanitary conditions of the population which do not correspond with changes in birth rate standards during a

certain period of time; the expansion of mercantile economy due to the development of communication networks and the effort put into creating an internal market linked to the foreign monopolist capital sphere; the intrinsic alliances at the political level with local industrial capital but also with traditional land ownership which, within the process, is reinforced in a contradictory movement with the pressures of the modernisation of the rural sector and demographic uprising; finally, a slow development of industry related to the monopolistic character of capital, which decisively informs the discrepancy between growth of industrial employment and growth of urban population. Additionally, urban primacy is fostered by locational patterns of dominant capitals and actors: on the one hand, international capital's extra local character induces a division of labour that works according to its interests. Therefore main urban centres primarily function as cores and links of international relationships; and on the other hand, dominant political and economic local groups prefer to concentrate in main cities and centralize their activities which presuppose a high influence in state decisions.

The interpretative field of "Latin American urban culture" (Gorelik, 2006) recaptures some contents of the modernisation and dependency approaches. However, it stands primarily as a critical perspective of the pathological character of urban space defined within these two dominant discourses. According to Gorelik (2006: 15ff), this posture primarily endorses the notion of 'culture' instead of modernisation as the core concept of analysis and focused on internal processes and power relations. This included the refusal of the projection of the shift from the pre-industrial to the industrial city onto Latin America. This aspect was an inherent reasoning within the rural-urban continuum conception. It included the supposition that Latin America was repeating with 100 years of delay the European modernization process. Additionally, the introduction of the notion of culture involved a critical approach towards the search for the constants between the colonial city and the contemporary metropolis which appeared as typical task developed within the dependent urbanization perspective.

In this context, it is worth bringing into discussion key elements of two main authors that belong to the field of Latin American urban culture. Whilst Romero (2004) aimed to identify 'the functions of the old in the new' by acknowledging culture as 'social form' (the set of beliefs, ideas, values, and life styles embodied in the different social groups) and the city as 'objectified culture', Rama (2004) embarked into a critical understanding of 'transculturation' reinstalling questions about 'inner colonialism'



using alternative methods of research, mainly the translation of literary critiques into a broader spatial and “cultural-political critique” (Gorelik, 2006: 23).

In reference to Romero’s proposal, Gorelik (2006) underlines the relationship between ideas (i.e. representations of space) and reality as well as his conclusion: if the city’s role was to constitute a new European reality in America, the accomplishments were as important as the failures. Yet, Gorelik also pointed out that this situation must not be considered as a reciprocal repeal but a mutual contamination which dialectically always produces new and heterogeneous situations. Here ‘conflict’ becomes essential when recognizing two interrelated aspects: firstly, that the city and its surrounding reality mutually modify in such a way that two contrasting ideologies are configured; and secondly, that within such confrontation of ideologies (whose foundation is cultural and its scenery is urban) the entire social and political Latin American history is constructed<sup>40</sup> (Gorelik, 2006: 18ff).

At the same time, we highlight Romero’s complex time line which represents a shift in terms of identification of the inner processes and structures without disregarding external influences. The time line exposes the formation of “urban societies and urban cultures” (Romero, 2004: 20) in six different phases where a particular interaction between ‘difference’, ‘sameness’ and physical ‘transformations’ of Latin American cities are revealed. This approach refers to an analysis of a ‘foundational cycle’ that developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries which followed by a subsequent constitution of ‘noble cities’ which took place from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This socio-spatial arrangement led to the configuration of ‘creole’ urban centres from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, Romero presents the unfolding of the socio-spatial processes in terms of ‘patrician’ and ‘bourgeois’ cities which developed from about the 1820s to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then to the 1930s correspondingly. Finally, the last period is defined as the ‘massified cities’<sup>41</sup>. This periodization essentially illustrates the interplay between the

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<sup>40</sup> Gorelik (2006: 20) remarks the relevance and topicality of Romero’s work by calling attention to the fact that his proposal was developing simultaneously with one of the most important contributions to urban culture: Raymond Williams’ “The Country and the City”.

<sup>41</sup> It is relevant to note that Romero’s (2004) periodization features temporal coincidences and certain dialogue with Rama’s (2004) six ‘stations’ and “process of transculturation” (Gorelik, 2006: 23) in terms of the identification of similar inner processes as well as stable ideological aspects. Rama’s (2004) analysis is divided into: *La ciudad ordenada* 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries; *La ciudad letrada* from last decades of 16<sup>th</sup> century to the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; *La ciudad escrituraria* from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1870s; *La ciudad modernizada* from 1870 to 1900; and finally *La polis se politiza* and *La*

“autonomous and heteronymous” (Romero, 2004: 20) development of the cities whilst proving the differences within each period and in each city in times of intense change.

It is essential to note that while Romero identifies the variation of urban developments throughout history, he detects the persistence of the ideology of upward social mobility and the maintenance of status: a phenomenon rooted in the ways of life, as well as in the social and power structures inherited from colonial times. In the process Romero relates this phenomenon to structural changes of the cities that start to manifest at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to the influence of the practices and representations of space of the first ‘entrenched’ social elites. This situation ends up materializing in a more evident manner from the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the formation of social classes in the context of the expansion of the capitalist system. Therefore, one may infer that, in contrast to assertions made from the modernization and dependency approaches, processes of differentiation among urban centres did start before their corresponding independences and processes of capitalist modernization which reveals alternative paths of characterisation of cities in Latin America (Jiménez, 2010).

#### **4.2. Existing approaches to the spatial structure of Latin American cities**

The analysis of the configuration process and general characteristics of spatial structures of Latin American cities has been developed from opposing lines of interpretation. While Bähr’s (1995; 2006) and Mertins’ et al (1995) proposal can be inscribed within the modernization approach, Segre’s (1986; 1999 [1991]) arguments share elements of the dependent urbanization theory. As mentioned above, all authors apply the collective case study, but the notion of urban centrality is only applied by Segre. Moreover, neither of the authors discusses with each other nor argues with the assumptions developed from the field of Latin American urban culture.

Therefore, the following two chapters are meant to describe and summarise the postures of Bähr, Mertins and Segre. This description involves the main characterisations of spatial structures and their corresponding periodizations. Such periodizations are expressed in figure 25 which is a useful resource to contrast the historic and spatial reading proposed in chapters five and six. Finally, chapter 4.3 is

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*ciudad revolucionada* which feature three time breaks: 1900/1911-1930 1930-1972 and 1973 onwards (Rama: 2004).

dedicated to identifying the limits of the existing approaches and defining the flaws and knowledge gaps to be bridged through our theoretical framework and research methods.

#### **4.2.1. Application of the concepts of “the City” and *Citybildung* in Latin America**

Bähr’s (1995 / 2006) and Mertins’ (1995) analyses of spatial structures in Latin America are constructed with the role of demographic processes and the concentration patterns of activities without referring to the notion of urban centrality. The phenomena of spatial concentration and accumulation are ‘modelled’ through techniques developed in North America in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We refer to the concentric (Burgess - 1925/1929), sectoral (Hoyt - 1939) and multi-polar (Ullmann - 1945) approaches that were aimed at expressing the internal spatial differentiation of cities and its future tendencies (Janoschka, 2002). In this context, Bähr and Mertins include the notion of *citybildung* within the observation of migration trends in major cities of the region.

There are two components to this method: first, the acceptance of Hofmeister’s (1996) intermediate posture between the ‘convergence and divergence’ theories. This posture proposes that global similar processes within cultural spatially different conditions create different types of urban structures e.g. the European, Russian-Soviet, Chinese, Oriental, Indian, South-Asiatic, Tropical-African, Latin American, Anglo American, South African, Australian-New Zealand and Japanese cities. According to this view, universal processes such as modernization, urbanization or economic development (e.g. industrialization) experience different reactions in particular societies which generate different forms and spatial structures. Yet, this idea contains constant elements, structures, internal and external spatial relations and, particularly, similar stages of development. These elements are closely interwoven with specific cultural features, and consequently it is from the interaction of uniqueness and supra-regional lawfulness that a cultural city type emerges. Second, the revision of several structural models proposed at the beginning of the 1980s that were based on grounding monographs<sup>42</sup> and extensive field work made by numerous researchers in Bogotá, Quito, Lima, Santiago, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico, Panamá city, Caracas, Buenos Aires as well as in many secondary cities of the region from 1969 onwards.

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<sup>42</sup> Particularly the contributions made by Wilhelmy *Südamerika im Spiegel seiner Städte* in 1952 and Sandner *Die Hauptstädte Zentralamerikas* in 1969 are especially considered.

As a result, Bähr and Mertins (1995) propose a structural model which is followed by a revision in the 2000s. The initial model is composed by three ‘sub-patterns’ which are characterised by the authors as follows:

- A ring-shaped pattern in the city core that is a characteristic of the colonial period. Within large cities, this central space becomes a component of a specific sequence of functional elements that develop from ‘the City’ (which emerges in the old core) to an area of inner-cellular-marginal neighbourhoods across a residential-commercial-industrial mixed zone.

- An axial-sector-shaped pattern which originated in the 1930s and 1940s that is connected, on the one hand, to advances in transport technology achieved via the ‘industrialization efforts’ that followed the Great Depression; and, on the other hand, to the migration of a large portion of the upper class (and soon after the middle class) from the former high-valued districts around the central *plaza* to new neighbourhoods. These two aspects are translated into two types of sector-shaped axes: the first is the outcome of the establishment of industrial complexes and their associated housing settlements for workers along railway lines and arterial roads; the second is developed from the establishment of ‘high-value’ residential districts. This establishment presupposes a sustained migration trend. However, such districts are often subjected to multiple displacements or shifts. In this context, the abandoned neighbourhoods become more or less severely degraded or experience a change in function as ‘City-expansion’ or ‘tertiary sub-centre’.

- A cellular-shaped pattern in the periphery that decisively influenced the image of major cities since the 1960s. This pattern appears as the result of the huge, often uncontrolled, widespread urban expansion triggered, according to the authors, by growing immigration pressures. Bähr and Mertins identify three types of settlements accordingly. First, there are informal, legal as well as illegal shanty towns that are either consolidated or in a consolidation process. These settlements are approached as the outcome of deficient supply of public and private housing for lower social classes. Second, there are social housing quarters. These settlements normally range from five storey housing blocks (or single family houses) that are built mostly for the lower middle class, to large scale housing projects in which the construction, enlargement and improvement of huts and houses are developed by the inhabitants i.e. *auto-construcción*

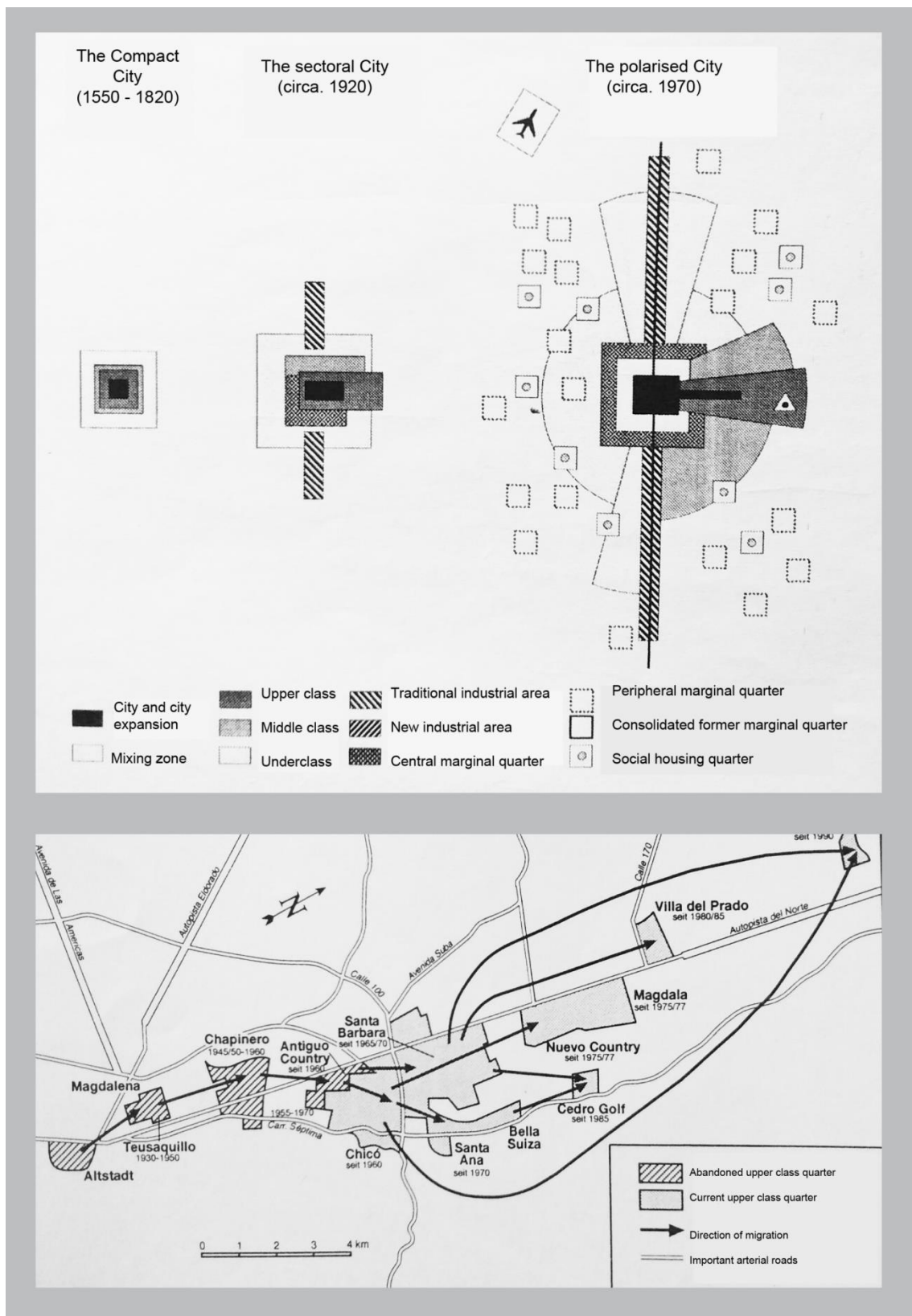
or “self-help”. Third, there are also upper class residential quarters which are informally developed to a certain extent. Their location was determined by small cottage or summer houses and more recently the construction of shopping centres which define a growth-front and the further expansion of this sort of neighbourhoods (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 85ff)

The authors assert that the main dynamics between these three components are associated with the migration trends of the different social groups. The interactions between the axial and ring sub-patterns emerge principally from the changing residential preferences of the upper and upper middle classes in time and a corresponding offer of services. However, the theoretical tools used to explain this phenomenon is problematic. On the one hand, Bähr and Mertins (1995) borrow from Hofmeister and Heineberg a definition of ‘the City’ that appears tautological: “the most central part of a large city with a spatial concentration of central functions of high-rank” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 100). This definition is complemented by a purely descriptive adjustment of the notion of *citybildung* which appears redundant and hence not explanatory: “the predominant shift of residential areas of the upper and upper middle classes to location of high-rank private facilities of the tertiary sector - services in the broad sense” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 101).

As a result, the appraisal of spatial structures is limited to a description of the way in which the built area called ‘the City’ locates with respect to the old centre. The development of this spatial feature is exposed as a linear process. This linearity consists in that ‘more developed’ cities present spatial variations that emerge in ‘backward’ urban centres after a certain number of years or decades. Four phases are identified accordingly:

- The first phase started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the *citybildung* sets in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Mexico City and Santiago de Chile through the partial reconstitution of the architecture of the historic city core. This transformation meant the construction of four or five storey buildings with representative façades. Yet, the authors observe that in some of these cities the Haussmannian urban model takes place, that is, the construction of great avenues with business, banks and administrative buildings by means of rigorous demolition. The spatial referents are: the *Avenida 18 de Julio* (in Montevideo from 1877), the *Avenida*

Fig. 17. Structural model of the L.A. City. Relocation and expansion of upper class neighbourhoods, the case of Bogotá



Source: Bähr (2006: 538) and Bähr and Mertins (1995: 114). Legend translated by the author

*de Mayo* (in Buenos Aires, 1889-1894), *Avenida Rio Branco* (Rio de Janeiro, 1905) and the Alameda Bernardo O'Higgins (Santiago de Chile). The final point of this stage is linked to the construction of the first high-rise buildings in the subcontinent: *El Palacio Salvo* (Montevideo, 1923-1928) and the *Martinelli Building* (São Paulo). Both were 26 storeys high and remained as the tallest buildings in Latin America until 1938.

Fig. 18. *Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins*, former *Alameda* in Santiago (2009)



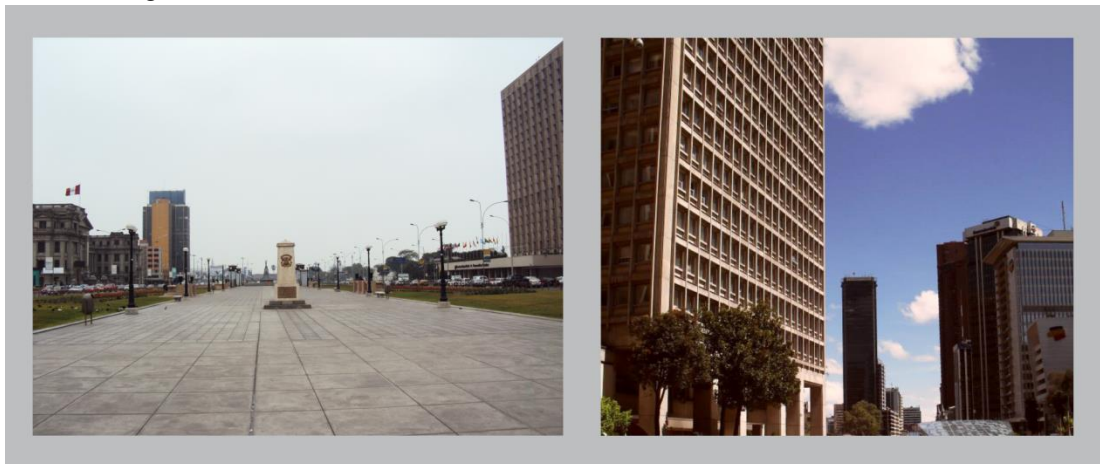
Source: Own elaboration

- The second phase started in the 1930s; and after the 1950s the main characteristics of this stage became more evident. During this period there was a functional and edificial transformation of 'the Cities' of Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Mexico City and Santiago de Chile; and on the other hand to the formation of the Cities of Bogotá, Caracas, and Lima. This transformation meant a densification of the finance sector (banks, insurance, etc.) but also the displacement of typical 'City' functions such as retail due to the expansion of office arrangements. Furthermore, there was an expansion of 'the City' which took place almost everywhere along important street axes towards upper class neighbourhoods; yet, Bähr and Mertins do not specify the exceptions to this rule. They only add that it is just after the 1950s that other 'Cities' can be recognised as such in capitals like San José, Panamá city, San Salvador and Ciudad

de Guatemala; capital cities where in the 1960s the skyline was still ‘expressionlessly flat’. Unfortunately these authors do not explain why this phenomenon takes place.

- The third phase of *Citybildung* started in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s with a further expansion of ‘the City’. However, according to Bähr and Mertins, this phase is also characterised by the competition between the ‘old city centre’ and nearby new developed areas. Bähr and Mertins assert that the development and functions of ‘the City’ advance along with the existing growth axes and/or around hotel complexes of international standard. This expansion involves the emergence of a mixed zone (or transition zone) in former upper-class neighbourhoods that are inhabited by the middle class during this period. While commercial passages evolve in the vicinities of the international hotels, the development of selected locations for offices and businesses takes place along the ‘growth arrow’ where the towers’ upper floors host the residences of members of the upper middle class. Additionally, a punctual tertiarisation takes place in former neighbourhoods of the upper class. Hence, old houses and villas are converted into offices and businesses and partly demolished or replaced by towers with services, offices, boutiques, etc. as well as housing. Examples of the phenomena described in this stage are the *Centro Internacional* and the punctual tertiarisation of the upper class neighbourhoods *Teusaquillo* and *Magdalena* in Bogotá; the migration of ‘the City’ in Santiago and Caracas; the east side of the *Avenida 10 de Agosto* towards north of Quito; and, the transformation of the axis of the *Paseo de la República* towards the upper class neighbourhood *Miraflores* in Lima which, according to Bähr and Mertins, started to compete with the old city centre already in the 1970s.

Fig. 19. Axis *Paseo de la República* in Lima (2009) and *Centro Internacional* in Bogotá (2014). Views towards the ‘growth arrow’ direction



Source: Own elaboration



Another applicable phenomenon in this stage is the increasing generalization of 'shopping malls' which entails a concentration of high-rank businesses and other service functions. Bähr and Mertins note that the first shopping-centre in Latin America was *Iguatemi* (1966) in São Paulo and that subsequently there were a few openings of shopping centres in São Paulo, Mexico City, Caracas and Bogotá. After a relatively short pause, there was a wave of shopping centre openings in almost all big Latin American cities. This explosion refers to a period that started in the middle of the 1980s, which extended to the beginning of the 1990s.

According to their description, these elements were mainly located along main traffic axes far but also nearby upper class neighbourhoods. These elements are seen as the engines of the expansion of those neighbourhoods in the traditional geographical direction of *citybildung*, and of development of sub-centres for 'higher demands' (i.e. hotels, restaurants, specialized businesses, boutiques, etc.) which involve a considerable increase of land prices and therefore the further displacement of residences of upper strata. In this sense, Bähr and Mertins assert that this phenomenon can be only explained with the increment of the purchasing power of the malls' 'respective clients'. According to these authors this phenomenon should be seen as signal of growing socio-economic disparities that are deepen through a 'social Apartheid' in major cities. Yet, Bähr and Mertins observe that shopping malls (which are guarded by security services and include entertainment facilities e.g. cinema, gyms, art galleries, cafés, etc.) constitute as places for tourism, leisure and weekend trips for lower social classes which have similar facilities in their neighbourhoods. However those facilities are substantially smaller and have little effect in the development of businesses and services (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 101ff).

As a result, Bähr and Mertins (1995) make a distinction by referring to the effects of *Citybildung* regarding the functionality and location of 'the Cities'. Consequently, two groups of metropolises are identified: Montevideo, Santiago and Buenos Aires whose 'Cities' tend to maintain their location as well as functionality; and on the other hand, Panamá, Lima, Bogotá or São Paulo have city centres that have been "relegated" (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 109). However, this discrimination does not lead to different appraisals of the 'centre-periphery relationship' in the main centres of the region, but to the generalization of two related characterisations presented in the 1970s

and in the 1990s by Sandner/Steger and Borsdorf. These characterisations have to do with the understanding of an ‘inversed’ centre-periphery structure that opposes the central-peripheral gradient of wealth and prestige that was characteristic in the colonial period. Bähr and Mertins underline the physical persistence of inherited morphological structures such as the checkerboard pattern and its central *plaza* but they also identify that these elements are no longer ‘in the centre’ of mass urban life and leisure. According to Bähr and Mertins, these foundational elements do not hold their orientational and representational functions as they did in colonial times (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 115/204).

In a latter text Bähr (2006) revises the structural model and presents a new phase of development. Yet, the notion of *citybildung* is substituted, with no explanation, by the revision of ‘new structural elements’ which define the last phase of “fragmentation” (Bähr, 2006: 538).

In this new scenario, new forms of segregation and socio-spatial elements are appraised through the notions of ‘globalization’ and ‘neoliberal political economy’. The main changes of spatial structures are described as the qualitative shift of the historical linear/axial and cellular patterns. Bähr relates this shift to ‘the replacement of the ISI’, a replacement that takes place from the beginning of the 1970s onwards. This author draws attention to this socio-economic transformation and connects it to the subsequent opening of the social gap, the generalization of crime as well as the affectation of the sense of safety in metropolitan areas. This replacement means adopting more or less radical measures of liberalization, privatization and deregulation. It also includes the adoption of the advances in communication and information technologies in the increment of international capital flows and, to some extent, the highly speculative investments in real estate projects e.g. housing, office buildings, and shopping centres<sup>43</sup>.

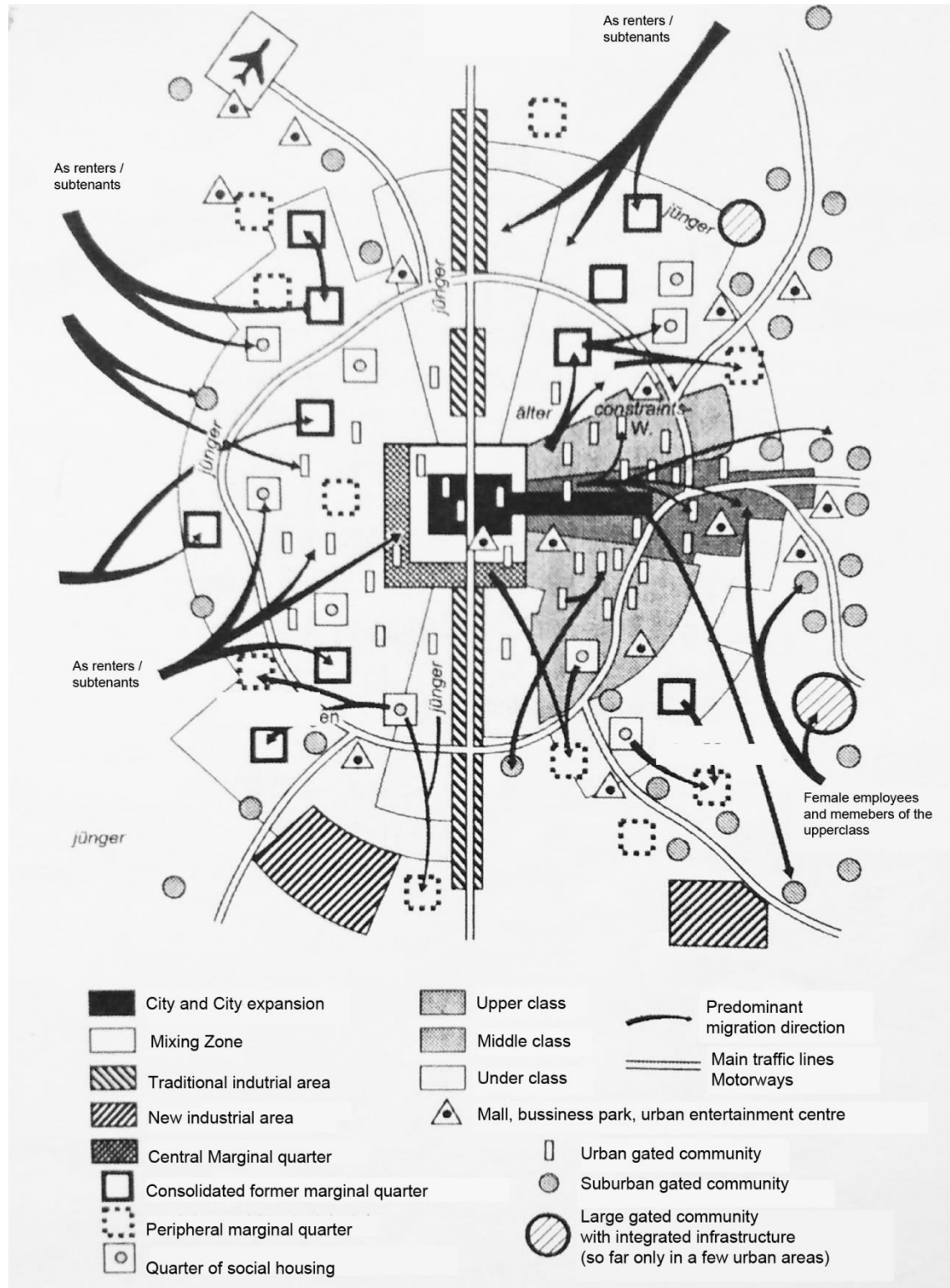
In addition, Bähr observes an overall loss of hierarchy of ‘the City’; this loss can be seen in old urban cores as well as in the ‘dissolution’ of the extensive ‘functional and social sectors’ of the Latin American main cities in favour of ‘nodal’, ‘island’ or

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<sup>43</sup> This new condition is also defined as “the retreat of the State,” (Bähr, 2006: 525) which, at the urban level, entails the promotion of a comprehensive deregulation of existing guidelines of land use and modes of construction as well as an extensive privatization of state and semi-governmental companies in charge of different fields such as housing, supply and disposal or transport systems.

‘fragmented’ structures which, according to Bähr (2006: 538ff), can now be considered as the dominant structural pattern.

Fig. 20. “The fragmented city”



Source: Bähr (2006: 539). Legend translated to English by the author

Bähr points out that, in functional terms, new malls, business parks or urban entertainment centres attract a lot of attention since these elements are no longer limited to upper class residential areas but appear anywhere inside or outside the urban area, especially along urban highways and their intersections. In some cities the concentration of such elements occur in different locations and appear similar to U.S.A's trends i.e. in the vicinity of international airports and appear in the form of edge city-like structures which includes large scale retail, entertainment or leisure-infrastructures, logistics, exclusive hotels, office space and new residential clusters. These phenomena are mostly expressed in major metropolises (mainly Santiago de Chile and Mexico City) and, to some extent, in middle and small cities. Yet, according to Bähr's scrutiny, Montevideo stands as an exception in Latin America due to 'the stagnant' economic and demographic development (Bähr, 2006: 536ff).

Fig. 21. U.S.A's spatial trends in Santiago de Chile (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

Bähr assesses this new stage of fragmentation based in two aspects: first, that the observed changes in spatial structures are not limited to this 'cultural space'; and secondly, that a development that has already evolved in North America is reconstructed through these changes. In this regard, it is asserted that the manifestation of the main features of the 'fourth urban revolution'<sup>44</sup> proposed by E. Soja is in its beginning which is especially evident in large cities. Thus, the peculiarities of Latin

<sup>44</sup> This term refers to the identification of Los Angeles as the prototype of deindustrialization of traditional industries versus re-industrialization i.e. new industries e.g. technology, information economy, etc.; change in the relationship centre-periphery i.e. decreasing importance of the city versus rise of edge cities; globalization and internationalization i.e. capital flows and migrations; international space versus excluded areas; the fortified city i.e. isolation of some groups in gated communities (Bähr, 2006: 545).

American cities (in the sense of a cultural-genetic approach) cede more and more and subsequently 'the image' is increasingly characterized by invariant/cross-cultural structural elements (Bähr, 2006: 545ff).

#### **4.2.2. Urban centrality in Latin America as the highest spatial expression of class struggle and their social contradictions**

Segre's revision of spatial structures in Latin America is defined by the introduction of the notion of urban centrality and a related description of a linear historical process in which colonialism and transculturalism are followed by a neo-colonial phase and finally by elements of capitalist modernity. In this perspective, deep social struggles and contradictions characterise urban development within the history of Latin American cities.

Contrary to Bähr's and Mertins' adoption of the notions of 'the City' and *Citybildung*, Segre defines a conceptual framework around the notion of 'urban centrality' that includes symbolic aspects and confers a more relevant place to the influence of power relations. Segre claims that 'centrality', as urban space, acquires relevance in the contemporary city due to the duality of spaces of labour and of habitation. In this regard, such a duality is a consequence of a historical process of a class struggle that began from the 'communitarian gap' of primitive populations which was progressively surrounded by representative and symbolic buildings. In this sense, the architectural and urban particularities vary according to the symbolic attributes of different functions that are socially hierarchized by the community and historically imposed by the dominant class. Therefore, Segre stresses that it is in 'the centre' where most symbolic components coincide with the functional attributes of buildings. The centre is the place where architectonical codes reach their 'highest semantic value and connotative charge' i.e. a particular signification due to its multiple and cohesive functions such as human contacts, cultural and commercial exchange, administration and consumption (Segre, 1986: 67).

Subsequently, Segre (1986) defines 'the evolution of elements of urban centrality' in Latin America through four periods. Contrary to the modernization approach, Segre begins with the 'pre-Columbian' phase in which central places were built by 'primitive societies' which expressed their 'cultural unity'. Then, he identifies the 'colonial' period which featured the 'homogeneity' of a unique urban and

architectural code at a continental scale from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the beginnings of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The third phase in Segre's analysis is called the 'neo-colonial' period that concludes in the 1930s and expressed an 'ideal or a-temporal universal culture'. Finally, Segre refers to a period that is not clearly differentiated from the previous one where the meanings of 'class struggle and social contradiction' are seen as constructs associated to the history of the centres of Latin American cities. This last period is extended to the 1990s in which, according to Segre, aspects inherent to 'the dependent capitalist system' are intensified resulting in the production of the 'suburbanization of central functions' as main spatial feature in Latin America.

Segre's pre-Columbian period is limited to the traces of the Maya, Aztec and Inca 'primitive societies'. According to his view, these societies featured a 'cultural unity' which allowed for the understanding of art works of 'high' intellectual tradition (e.g. popular statuettes), the urban layout and the symbolic components of the centre within the same code. Hence, the centre is defined as the environment where the exteriorization of communitarian culture in religious festivities and exchange take place i.e. basic mercantile activities (Segre, 1986: 67). This cultural unity, which presupposes autonomy and aesthetic coherence, is destroyed by the coloniser through a process of "transculturation" (Segre, 1986: 68). As a result, the Hispanic culture is imposed upon the dominated territory by means of new system of signs. These signs coincided with dominant European aesthetic values of the time, mainly, medieval, renaissance and *herrerian* styles.

According to Segre, the main outcomes of this transculturation are, on the one hand, the formation of a *cultura mestiza* (mixed culture) characterised by the ideological-cultural relationship between colonisers and colonised. And on the other hand, the 'homogeneity of a code at a continental scale' which is accomplished in spite of counteracting aspects such as divergent project and technological experience of colonisers, the adjustment of economic, material and technical imperatives to the local ecological conditions, and variations of communicative intentionality of spatial facts according to particularities of local population, etc.

In this sense, the concentration of activities in the *Plaza Mayor* or *Plaza de Armas* had four objectives: first, to show the cohesion of institutions of the 'ruling class' (church, civil, military power, etc.); second, to oppose the habitat's architectonical

standards which are strictly determined by functional exigencies; third, to counteract the stylistic popular interpretation of basic architectural elements; and fourth, to merge the functional and symbolic levels with social participation. For Segre, the combination of these aspects evolved into the formation of 'public space' i.e. the space where ceremonies, military parades, festivals, commercial transactions, etc. occur. Segre supports this statement on public space by claiming that in these gatherings, administrators, aristocracy, Spanish, Creole bourgeoisie, merchants, craftsmen, slaves, and natives assume the coloniser's code, rituals and different behaviour which confer meaning to 'the symbolizing space of the centrality'. Segre explicitly opposes the idea of the existence of a strong social segregation and lack of participation in everyday life in the colonial city, and ends up categorizing colonial centres as 'poly-functional' i.e. spaces where exploiters and exploited participated in social life (Segre, 1986: 67f).

Subsequently, the next period is identified as 'neo-colonial' because it is characterised by the formation of the different nations of the subcontinent in a context of promotion of commercial and industrial development subordinated to the interests of the European nations. At this point the role of the new elites is underlined because this social class saw Europe as the symbol of progress, civilization and good manners and therefore promoted the 'classical code' to substitute the traditional Hispanic spatial patterns. This phenomenon is seen in terms of the impact in 'the most advanced countries' of the region and, in accordance to this approach, the characteristics of the spatial development of cities such as Buenos Aires or Montevideo are generalized for the rest of the main cities of Latin America.

Thus, the characterisation of spatial structures is mainly defined in terms of the identification of the adoption of foreign architectural codes in public buildings. In addition 'the centre' appears as an "hypothetical global symbolization of the community that is now identified with the State apparatus" (Segre, 1986: 68). This symbolisation emphasises the adoption of *Haussmannian* features as well as 'buildings-symbols' which are physically integrated to squares, avenues, streets, etc. that express the institutionalization of national bourgeoisies and the aspirations of liberal governments and military dictators. With his focus entrenched mainly in the Argentinean case, Segre ends up identifying the loss of spatial homogeneity as the key feature of this period. Such loss is connected to the spatial writing of the 'political project of the bourgeoisie'

i.e. the consolidation of institutions as well as the exteriorization of their perennality and stability.

Additionally, the application of the classical code is seen as the materialization of an 'ideal or a-temporal universal culture' forged by dominant actors who, exploiting the wealth of the inner regions of the country, conceived the main urban centres as the space in which their social existence unfolded (Segre, 1986: 73). Yet this critical approach is, in a way, contradicted since Segre ends up characterising in a positive way this phase because the correspondence between architectural objects and urban layout (typical of the colonial period) was preserved in the new urban project of the elites.

A further problem is revealed when Segre identifies additional urban centrality phenomena developed in other cities. These developments appear as deviations of the previous observations and enter in contradiction to his initial framework focused on the role of class relations in time. Segre sees the development of spaces featuring classical European codes 'outside the primitive colonial core' as a normal result of demographical and physical growth as well as the increment of the functions of the state i.e. elements that are also present in cities considered within the first group of 'more developed' cities. At the same time 'the decline' of the 'colonial repertoire' observed in cities such as Bogotá is perceived as a logical outcome of the introduction of sub-urban bourgeois residences and the 'occupation' of the colonial core by lower social strata. Nevertheless, Segre classifies at the end all cities within a single group which leads to a great inconsistency in his argumentation.

This persistent difficulty to identify divergent city types within the region becomes evident when Segre (1986: 69f) borrows a list of numerous urban interventions from Romero (2004 [1976]) and groups them together claiming that they are all related to the renovation of central areas. However, we consider that these spaces differ essentially in their localization and purpose (and thus meaning) in regard to the city centre. From our perspective there is, on the one hand, a group of interventions that aimed at re-coding the original city core, such as the axis of the *Avenida de Mayo* in Buenos Aires or the *Rio Branco* Avenue in Rio de Janeiro which required mass demolition in core areas; and on the other hand, urban projects that played a key role in urban expansion along avenues and parks which involved opposed spatial strategies and representations which are not elucidated by Segre. Examples of the second group are:



the *Avenida La Reforma* in Mexico City delimited by *mansiones Porfirianas*; The *Paseo Colón*, the *Avenida Arequipa* and *La Alameda* in Lima; *La Alameda* in Santiago de Chile; *Avenida Bolívar* in Caracas; the *Paseo Colón* in Bogotá; the parks of *Bosque de Chapultepec* and *Palermo* in Mexico and Buenos Aires.

Fig. 22. East end of *Avenida de Mayo* in Buenos Aires (2009) and *Avenida Arequipa* in Lima (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

The next period outlined by Segre is initiated in the 1930s and is characterised in two ways: first, the ‘segregative’ instead of ‘convoking’ character of ‘the centre’, and second, the presence of ‘renewed codes’ of the economic penetration within a context of real estate speculation that imposes the laws and orientations of spatial structures (Segre, 1986: 72ff).

In reference to the first aspect, Segre asserts that ‘the centre’ does not constitute the meeting point of the community, the place of celebration, cultural exchange and creativity. The reason of this incongruity, according to Segre, is the historical Latin American forced primacy of some functions in main urban areas and the social segregation. Segre adds that the notion of ‘the centre’ as, “the element of the urban structure that assures the exchange needed between the diverse functional elements that compose the city,” (M. Castells quoted in Segre, 1986: 74) is not valid in Latin America. Consequently, Segre identifies a geographical prevalence of ‘bourgeois and exclusive’ city centres in Latin America. However, this characterisation enters in contradiction with Segre’s simultaneous identification of ‘a centre’ of Latin American cities ‘occupied’ by the masses and surrounded by upper class residences and related spatial signs. According to our interpretation, the existence of divergent types of spatial structures (i.e. those characterised by an exclusive centre and those defined by the presence of the masses in the centre) in Latin America challenges Segre’s preconception of the existence of a single ‘Latin American City’.

Thus, there is no clarity in Segre's texts about the different types of spatial structures and their (apparently divergent) social structures and historical processes within the Latin American region. Nevertheless, Segre does underline relevant phenomena concerning the configuration of the so-called 'bourgeois and exclusive centre' that are worth recalling in our state-of-the-art. Segre observes the limitation of mass cultural activities in the centre which involves the repeal of popular sectors. This is achieved by particular architectural and urban interventions which allow 'the social participation in the centre' only to dominant minorities (bourgeoisie, intellectuals, etc.). At the same time, there is a sort of peripheralization (or suburbanization) of the spatial referents of the participation of the masses (e.g. sport activities) and of confrontation to the system (i.e. universities). This is, according to Segre, a mechanism to achieve better academic and police control as well as isolation of students of social reality. Therefore, Segre points out that alienation and disaffection are produced along with the 'loss of identity with spaces and forms of daily conviviality'. For Segre, typical examples of this sort of planned isolation are the University Campus in *Nuñez* (Buenos Aires) and the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) in Santiago de Chile. In both cases Segre blames the location and morphological characteristics of the buildings as well as the agency and professional background of the designers who did not address the social and political scenario. While the campus is isolated from 'the urban layout', the 'a-temporal and introverted' CEPAL building is placed according to natural surroundings which is a critical element for Segre since this is a building that is supposed to be inserted in the very centre of urban life due to its function of dealing with social and economic problems of Latin America (Segre, 1986: 75f).

In regard to the presence of 'renewed codes', Segre identifies introverted architectural and urban spaces. He asserts that institutional buildings, office buildings, hotels, transnational branches buildings, banks, and particularly introverted spatial arrangements called *Centros Cívicos* facilitate the permeation of foreign capitals and the introduction of practices inherent to the 'American way of life'. For example, the Mexican National Lottery tower, the secretariat of foreign affairs in Mexico City, and particularly the *Centros Cívicos* of Caracas and Lima (*Centro Simón Bolívar* and *Centro Cívico de Lima*) where "tourists and business men feel safe from contamination, sicknesses and political riots [...], sign the contracts that indebt even further the

country, breath and participate briefly of the attributes of high technological development” (Segre, 1986: 73). According to Segre, these examples differ from configurations of public buildings in central areas developed in previous decades (i.e. 1940s) such as Santiago’s *Barrio Cívico* and the buildings erected around the *Plaza de Mayo* in Buenos Aires.

Fig. 23. *Barrio Cívico* in Santiago (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

In addition, Segre identifies strategies to ‘bring back’ high income population to the centre such as the *Parque Central de Caracas* (1969) which features four 43 storey residential towers, a 52 storey office tower as well as a commercial platform for 16000 inhabitants. Segre observes that these ‘functional cores’ are located ‘in or out of the centrality’ according to “prevailing conditions in each city” (Segre, 1986: 73). However, he does not deepen into semiotic aspects or the factors that determine divergent location patterns of such buildings and spatial configurations. Instead his focus relies on the aesthetical impact of vertical structures and assures that they are intended to “counteract the bland effect of the speculative urban layout and to demonstrate the possibility of a revitalization of the centrality by means of new forms that contrast with each other [...]”(Segre, 1986: 76). This implies, “the return to monumental symbols but without the urban coherence of the *beaux-arts* system because the new symbols accept the game rules of land speculation and private property [...] which replaces attached construction patterns” (Segre, 1986: 76f).

This last period is extended to the 1990s where ‘spatial contradictions’ are intensified and affect the ‘symbolic universe of the centrality’ in Latin America (Segre, 1999: 194ff). In this regard, Segre (1999) asserts that the dependant capitalist system is the source of lack of planning and subordination to private initiatives which engenders the excessive concentration of functions in central areas, the no prevision of mobility infrastructure and the radicalization and spread of low density developments. Unfortunately, Segre neither develops this approach nor provides specific examples to better understand this connection between the capitalist mode of production and the transformation of spatial structures.

Fig. 24. *Centro Cívico* in Lima (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

According to him, the spatial outcome observed in the Latin American cities is the arbitrary densification of the city core through exclusive office and administrative buildings as well as the suburbanization of functions. This densification trend presupposes an ‘individualizing and aggressive language’ that threatens the coherence between architectural object and urban layout. Moreover, Segre relates these dense spaces to an ‘availability of wealth’ which does not belong to the reality of Latin America. At the same time, Segre links this characterisation of the city core to the peripheral spread of ‘bourgeois residential areas’ and ‘spontaneous settlements’. Segre’s (1999) examples of this tendency are aesthetically singular skyscrapers that were mostly built during the 1970s and 1980s to host different sort of offices, stock exchange, transnational, national companies and banks in several cities of the subcontinent: the headquarters of *Petrobrás* (Rio de Janeiro), the Citicorp Centre (São Paulo), *Banco de Comercio Exterior* (Panamá), *Filalbanco* (Guayaquil), headquarters of Bancomer, the

*Bolsa Mexicana de Valores* (Mexico city), and *Prouurban* office building (Buenos Aires).

On the other hand, Segre identifies ‘the suburbanization of functions’ as a phenomenon correlated to ‘the abandoning of central spaces by the ruling class’. This is the migration of ‘commercial activity’ to malls along with private and public offices and leisure facilities. This situation configures new settlement poles that are defined as ‘non-planned initiatives’ whose arbitrariness produces ‘contradictions’ in the internal functioning of the city and urban life i.e. the decline of traditional neighbourhoods, increase of low-income population in historic buildings, disintegration of the commercial system as well as exorbitant costs of technical networks and road systems. Examples of this trend are divided into shopping centres (*Perisur*, Mexico; *Plaza de Las Américas*, San Juan de Puerto Rico; *Unicentro*, Bogotá; *Riocentro*, Rio de Janeiro), isolated offices linked to leisure activities (Salvador da Bahia’s Administrative-political centre and the *Casa do Comércio*) and entire segregated quarters (Medellín’s city quarter composed by bunker-residences and glass buildings; the *Barra da Tijuca* in Rio de Janeiro; *Miraflores* in Lima).

The following figure summarizes and contrasts the ideas of Bähr, Mertins and Segre. As mentioned above, this is a resource to contrast the state-of-the-art contents to the spatial reading proposed in this research project. In addition, this figure serves as a graphic reference to discuss the limits of the modernisation and dependency perspectives that are presented in the next chapter.

Modernization Theory

MAIN FACTORS OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT



CITYBUILDING AND CENTRE - PERIPHERY CHARACTERIZATION

Plaza

"Reverse Burgess-type" Ring pattern

Partial reconstruction of architecture of historic cores in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Mexico city and Santiago.

First 'Skylines' in importance of the city that grew in old urban cores.

Overall decline in importance of the city that grew in old urban cores.

"Burgess-type" Axial sector pattern Citybuilding

Densification financial sector / displacement of retailers

Partial implementation of the Hausmanian model.

Establishment of 'The Cities'

Transformation of existing cities and formation of the cities of Bogota, Caracas and Lima.

Further expansion and migration of 'the city'

1966: First Mall / Iguatemi (Sao paulo)

punctual tertialisation of former upper classes neighborhoods in Bogota, Lima, Santiago, Caracas and Quito

Generalization of malls / urban entertainment centres, business parks.

First high-rise buildings: Martelli Building (Sao Paulo) El Palacio Salvo ( Montevideo)

"Av. 16 de Julio ( Montevideo) Av. de Mayo ( Buenos Aires) Av. Rio Branco (Rio de Janeiro) Alameda Bernardo O'Higgins ( Santiago)

Start of Citybuilding

1550s

1870s

1920s

1990s

circa 2010

Until 1500

1500

1800

1930

circa 2000

Dependant urbanization Theory

MAIN FACTORS OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT



EVOLUTION OF ELEMENTS OF "URBAN CENTRALITY"

beginning of 'transculturation' process

Imposition of hispanic culture by means of a new system of signs that coincide with dominant European aesthetic values

Latinamerican urbanization coincides with the shift in urban history, bourgeoisie erects new symbols

substitution of colonial typologies by hausmanian features and increment of functions of state

'suburbanization of commercial functions'

'arbitrary densification of the city core'

Introduction of the American 'Way of Life'

'contradictions' in the integral functioning of the city

The centre: expression of a 'mixed culture' Colonial period

Use-value City

The centre: an 'ideal or a-temporal universal culture' Neo-Colonial period

Exchange-value City

renaissance abstract ideal: THE GRID

homogeneity of architectural and urban code at continental scale

concentration of activities in the PLAZA DE ARMAS

'functional cores' built by the state /intreversion of elitist activities and car-urbanization

non-planned new settlement poles

presidential and municipal palaces, national congress, tribunals, post-office, national library, central police, cathedral, ministries, hospitals, barracks, museums.

non-individual introverted interventions: arrangements of public buildings in Santiago and Buenos Aires

Skyscrapers, stock exchange, national companies and banks, offices, hotels, transnational branches.

THE CENTRE: EXPRESSION OF CLASS STRUGGLE

SPATIAL CONVERGENCE "urban image" characterized by invariant / cross-cultural structural elements

THE CENTRALITY constitutes the highest architectural and urban expression of the deep social, political, economic and cultural contradictions in LatinAmerica

Fig 25. Approaches to spatial structures in Latin America - Processes and main concepts. Source: Own elaboration

### 4.3. The limits of the modernisation and dependency perspectives

The literature review presented above constitutes a fundamental base to contribute to the identification and characterisation of city types in Latin America. The existing approaches to spatial structures are based on extensive field work in numerous and different kind of cities of Latin America. The state-of-the-art on the interpretative fields of urban space in Latin America provided us with a set of concepts and periodizations from which innovative analysis can emerge. Moreover, the modernisation and dependency perspectives present the phases of the historical process in an illustrative manner providing bridges between social and spatial phenomena including morphological, functional and symbolic aspects.

However, the proposals of Bähr, Mertins and Segre are elaborated from normative standpoints. These standpoints are related to the understanding of the ‘European’ and ‘North American’ cities as normative models which presupposes the introduction of categories that are outlined according to other socio-spatial realities. Such analytic framework involves the already mentioned characterisation of Latin American cities as ‘deviations’ or ‘pathological’ entities. This interpretation obscures identity and the power relations that can better explain the (re)production of this type of cities.

From our perspective, this analytic disadvantage emerges from the understanding of space and time i.e. history of Bähr, Mertins and Segre. These proposals depict the configuration of spatial structures as a linear process: where the modernisation approach considers aspects of *citybildung* as a part of an organic development led by advanced cities and caught up by backward centres; the dependent perspective falls into a bidirectional reasoning in which culture (difference) is seen as the result of economy. Therefore, the analysis falls into a parallelism with general or universal processes (e.g. the emergence of capitalist urbanization) which obstructs the possibility to reveal and explain socio-spatial singularities. As a result, different contradictions and problems connected to forms of determinism arise.

In reference to Bähr’s and Mertins’ contribution, it is possible to identify a strong influence of ‘functionalism’. This influence leads the authors to acknowledge spatial development as a one-to-one process in which phases coincide with technological or functional factors such as advances of transport systems or economical

transformations. In this sense, this framework appears helpful only to describe changes such as the emergence at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century of ‘Cities’ in capitals such as Montevideo or Buenos Aires i.e. a phenomenon related to the shift of the agricultural export model in times of expansion of global market dynamics. The functional approach becomes limited when examining further aspects like the character and locational patterns of such ‘Cities’ in both, the so-called ‘advanced’ and ‘backward’ urban centres. From our point of view, this shortcoming is linked to the omission of the semiotic dimension of space which leads to an ambiguous posture towards power relations and hence to difficulties to elucidate spatial phenomena.

This situation presupposes a selective omission of the agency of the State when regarding the creation and transformation of urban centrality patterns<sup>45</sup>. In this regard, for instance, where the preservation of the location and functionality of ‘the Cities’ in Montevideo, Buenos Aires or Santiago is said to be strictly connected to the existence of “urban planning and design policies,” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 109), the displacement of ‘City functions’ and decay in many other urban cores in the subcontinent have to do with “internal factors,” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 203) represented by corruption, nepotism, opportunism, the formation of military governments, parasitic conduct of the upper class, degeneration of public morality, etc. Consequently, the different urban societies are not only characterised as pathological, but their differentiation is purely arbitrary. Planning as well as moral or ethical problems are present in the whole region. For example, Lima and Bogotá were subjected to state-driven urban renewal at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate in the centre new functions within modernisation processes. In spite of this important fact related to the official development of ‘urban planning and design policies’, these two cities appear classified within the non-planned, corrupt or degenerated cities<sup>46</sup>.

Bähr’s and Mertins’ posture also lends itself to geographical determinisms and to a pure rationalist understanding of socio-spatial behaviour. In this regard, it is asserted that *citybildung* concerning governmental facilities (i.e. the construction of

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<sup>45</sup> This problem is observed in Gottdiener’s (1986a: 204ff) critic to the functional and urban ecology approach which is seen as a ‘fallacy’ connected to the social-ecological liberal model of society. Gottdiener strongly criticizes the incongruent idea that urban patterns are produced according to the neo-classical mechanisms of near perfect competition between large numbers of separate individuals. In this sense, he identifies that ecologists act as if the state does not exist in spite that it is clearly a major source of financial support for cities and the principal force that channels growth into distinctive urban patterns.

<sup>46</sup> See the cases of the construction in Lima of a “republican city centre,” (Ludeña, 2002: 50) and the planning and development of a political-C.B.D in Bogotá which will be analysed further below.



administrative centres) is generated mainly by “lack of available areas” as well as “difficult traffic conditions,” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 103) and that it propels horizontal as well as vertical expansion (i.e. central bus stations, shopping centres, clinics, further administrative buildings) far away from ‘the city front’ at arterial roads towards airports like the ones observed in the 1960s in Panamá City, Ciudad de Guatemala and San Salvador at the outer borders of the city centre, and thereafter in Bogotá and Salvador/Bahía. Likewise, *citybildung* regarding the private sector is said to be caused by the ‘growing distance to consumers, rising land prices, obsolescence of the inner city fabric,’ as well as “noise, pollution, closeness to customers, better accessibility to new locations and the increasing lack of safety in city centres” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 105). According to Bähr’s and Mertins’ linear approach, this phenomenon takes place gradually according to development pace and hence it is first observed in cities such as Rio de Janeiro where *Copacabana* exceeded the functional importance of ‘the City’ already in the 1950s. At the same time, Bähr and Mertins identify that in those years the adjacent part of *La Carrera Séptima* in Bogotá retained its character as main commercial spot beside the historic centre. In contrast, ‘the Cities’ of smaller and ‘slower’ capitals of the region such as Guatemala and La Paz had “relatively few relocation and expansion tendencies,” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 105).

These observations are relevant empirical data to be considered. Nonetheless, the explanation of *citybildung* becomes vague since it appears as a normal or pre-programmed phenomenon in which socio-political and cultural dimensions are excluded. This exclusion implies the overlooking of potential actions/omissions and the obvious influence of the state in the channelling of growth patterns through, for instance, the financing and acquirement of land for urban renewal, etc. In so doing, segregation dynamics are only explained from the idea of perfect competition and accessibility to services. Aspects such as ‘difficult traffic conditions, safety, noise, dust, presence of beggars’, etc. are seen as final causes of displacement of central functions neglecting the fact that these are already consequences of structural socio-spatial relations which are not sufficiently discussed.

Within this context the notions of ‘the City’ and *citybildung* restrict the analysis, especially when extraordinary phenomena develop like the emergence of C.B.Ds. Particularly, the condition of ‘competition’ mentioned by the authors within the inner space of metropolises in the 1990s (which suggests the evolvement of a fundamental

change) does not represent a factor to revise in depth the notion of *citybildung*. Conversely, Bähr and Mertins use the term “actual *citybildung*” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 103) to group the issue of “the separation of residential and service functions connected to an allocation of high specialized quarters” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 105) with “the formation of true C.B.Ds” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 105). This categorisation does not consider that the presence of these new distinctive central spaces might be related to a new phenomenon and therefore to a reformulation of interpretative tools. This conceptual ambiguity becomes more apparent when *citybildung* is not differentiated from terms such as “decentralization,” (Bähr & Mertins, 1995: 105) which convey similar aspects but imply different structures.

Additionally, the substantial variations identified in terms of location, hierarchy and displacement of functions does not lead to revise former structural models and concepts. On the contrary, there is a new generalisation of a single model for the whole region in the proposal presented by both authors (1995). Characterizations defined within different conditions are re-introduced without further arguments, particularly the one proposed by Sandner/Steger and Borsdorf (1970s) in which the centre-periphery relationship is portrait as the opposite of the colonial structure i.e. the ‘Burgess type’ which neglects new phenomena and ends up reducing the Latin American context as a counterfeit of the North American one.

This trend towards the equation of Latin America to other socio-spatial contexts is deepened by Bähr (2006) who claims that there is a total convergence in reference to the fourth urban revolution (E.Soja) first spatialized in U.S.A. This posture appears contradictory and hinders the debate. On the one hand, it negates totally the original intermediate position between spatial convergence and divergence (Hofmeister) that at least allowed the discussion on spatial difference within the modernization approach; and on the other hand, it overlooks the coexistence of different expressions of urban centrality within cities which is an essential aspect to characterise spatial structures not only in functional but also in semiotic terms. In this sense, a general identification of spatial fragmentation and homogenization based on a linear and strictly diachronic approach neglects the fact of the accumulative nature of the urban phenomenon (i.e. centrality).

In regard to Segre's proposal there is a strong contradiction between the development of the analysis and the conceptual framework on urban centrality presented by the author. Determinisms inherited from the dependent urbanization theory eclipse the concepts proposed by Segre which refer to constitutive processes of material culture according to social relations and their symbolisation in space.

As a result, the study acquires a strict linear approach in which the depiction of historical phases and corresponding spatial meanings of spatial structures becomes a parallel exemplification between global phenomena (e.g. take off of capitalist mechanisms) and spatial transformations in city cores. Thus the attempt to identify cultural specificities is counteracted by the overestimation of external influences such as global market dynamics or the expansion of life styles such as the so called 'car-urbanization' connected to North American trends. In this regard, for instance, there is no clear differentiation and characterisation of urban centrality periods within the neo-colonial phase (i.e. the commercial and industrial dependency) in spite that it is a rather long period (200 years) which features morphological and functional variations. At the end, Segre's analysis turns into a diagnosis of irregularities identified as outcomes of a 'dependent capitalism' such as over-concentration and sub-urbanization of functions. Therefore, he cannot refer to spatial meanings and their relationships.

In this context, the idea of: "the centre as highest expression of social struggles and contradictions," (Segre, 1986: 75ff) is seen as a historical constant and generalized for present spatial configurations. The spatial fact of the coexistence of different expressions of urban centrality is concealed and the concepts presented for previous phases (i.e. the centre as expression of 'a mixed culture' and 'ideal universal culture') are not recaptured to discuss their influence in the transformation or maintenance of current spatial configurations. Additionally, the notions of contradiction and struggle tend to be reduced to the violent encounter or clash of social groups in significant spaces. The "attack to physical symbols" (Segre, 1986: 76) such as city centres is a universal practice in history and therefore cannot be taken as a differentiating factor<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> In this regard Segre (1977: 162f) identifies the manifestations of independence that took place at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the urban violence of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that reaches its highest expression in the centre. Examples and key dates of 'explosion of popular aggressiveness' in the centres of Latin American cities are: 1945 and 1955 in *Plaza de Mayo*, Buenos Aires (demand for the presence of Juan Domingo Perón and bombing by Argentinean Marines); 1968 in *La plaza de las tres culturas*, Mexico (Tlatelolco students massacre); 1969 in Cordoba's city centre (*El Cordobazo*, riot against the military

These sort of generalizations restricts the characterisation of city types. In this sense, Segre's contribution appears to be similar to Bähr's and Mertins' proposal because it provides only a vague appraisal about spatial structures for the whole subcontinent disregarding the presence of divergent tendencies which are worth analysing. For example, those observed in cities that re-coded their central areas and maintain spatial hierarchies (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, etc.) which contrast to cities that present a juxtaposition of original cores and recent expressions of urban centrality such as Bogotá, Lima or Caracas.

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dictatorship); 1973 the bombing of the *Palacio de la Moneda*, Santiago de Chile (attack made by the Chilean army to assassinate the legitimate president Salvador Allende).

## 5. Historical moments of urban centrality in Bogotá

This chapter is composed of two sections. The first one focuses on the pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá and examines the creation of a noble colonial city type. The creation of this type of city is informed by the dominance of the communitarian associative structure of *La Encomienda*. This ‘moment’ of urban centrality is followed by the supremacy of the associative structure of *La Hacienda*, a phenomenon related to the crisis and decline of *La Encomienda*. This situation entailed the enhancement of the ‘presentative characteristics’ of Bogotá which is defined as a typical noble city. A third moment of urban centrality is characterised by, on the one hand, the reconfiguration of political power after the independence of the Spanish Kingdom, and on the other hand, the maintenance of the prevailing associative structure within the emerging industrial capitalism. Hence, urban centrality retains its pre-modern characteristics ‘furnished’ with ‘modern accessories’.

The second section addresses a phase of ‘socio-spatial crisis’, although it follows the moment of pre-modern urban centrality this phase cannot be defined as ‘modern’. This crisis takes place within the struggle of the communitarian associative structure of *La Hacienda* to remain as the dominant associative model in the context of massification and implementation of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). In this process, the essential characteristics of the spatial structure of Bogotá are established. We refer to the city’s spatial structure at the end of the 2000s (i.e. around 2010). As a result, Bogotá presents a fragmentary materialization of ‘modern urban centrality’ features, which responds to socio-spatial strategies and deep contradictions that are expressed via pre-modern as well as modern spatial codes. In other words, new practices are introduced without jeopardizing the inherited power relations and their related spatial signs connected to *La Hacienda*. Nonetheless, in spatial terms the struggle between ‘the old’ and ‘the new’ opened by the end of the 1970s the possibility for a different organization of spatial symbolism.

## 5.1. Pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá

### 5.1.1. First moment: The creation of a noble colonial city type

The first moment of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá takes place from 1538 to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is defined by two interrelated aspects: the spatial materialization of the symbolism of colonial power and the dominance of the communitarian associative structure of *La Encomienda*<sup>48</sup>.

The essential components of *Santafé*'s (later on, named Bogotá) spatial structure and its strong functional and semiotic hierarchy were configured within a relative short period of time. This was because of the coincidences and contradictions between numerous aspects related to the emerging mercantilist system, the missionary character of the Spanish colonial project, the spatial practices of the colonizers, and the characteristics of the pre-existing socio-spatial reality that they encountered. However, drawing on Guillén (1979), Romero (2004) and Martínez (1976) it is possible to identify two main factors within the configuration of Bogotá's (*Santafé*'s) primary spatial structure: first, the crown's strategies used to take control of the colonisation process; and second, a particular and effective formation of the associative structure of *La Encomienda*.

Regarding Guillén's (1979) analysis, *La Encomienda* evolves from the tensions between the symbolic and socio-economic interests of the colonisation, and the native socio-spatial structures (e.g. the *Muisca* indigenous territory) that were located in the central region of today's Colombian nation, where the city of Bogotá is situated.

In reference to the Spanish colonization, it is crucial to point out that it unfolds within the expansion of European Christianity. Therefore, the instrumentalization of the American territories exceeded simple economic exploitation. In this sense, the historical and unquestionable righteousness of the holy war against unfaithful, dark and inferior worlds (ingrained in Roman as well as Medieval values) and the experience of the re-conquest of the Spanish Peninsula (in which social-mixing and acculturation had

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<sup>48</sup> The *encomienda* (from the Spanish verb *encomendar*, "to entrust") is normally defined as a characteristic socio-economic institution of the Spanish colonization of America that was established as a right granted by the King (as early as 1503) to the Spanish subject (*encomendero*) who received taxes due to the crown from the indigenous population. Within this form, the natives were acknowledged as subjects of the crown and the *encomendero* did not own the land on which the natives lived. In this research work, we return to Fernando Guillén's approach, who defines *La Encomienda* as an "associative structure" (Guillén, 1979: 35).

become a true risk for the Spanish kingdom) motivated the intended socio-spatial transformation and homogenization of the Continent (Romero, 2004: 13/65).

However, this socio-spatial project was met with unbeatable obstacles. One of these obstacles was the contradiction between the economic and cultural goals of the colonisation. This contradiction consisted in that the intended homogenization of the indigenous territory through the Christianization of the natives (and hence their liberation from slavery) jeopardized the relation of domination between the colonisers and the indigenous population, particularly regarding the extraction of taxes and natural resources. This situation was evident just after the conquest. On the one hand, the Hispanic exercise of authority was based on the dominance of a territory regardless of the ethnic origin of its inhabitants. In this context, the crown considered the natives as free subjects of the king and their reduction to slavery as illegitimate<sup>49</sup>. And on the other hand, during the first years of Spanish presence on the continent, the sole labour force was composed by defeated, or surrendered natives, who were subjected to servile conditions (Guillén, 1979: 34). Concerning the *Muisca*s, their subjection was only possible long-term. The strategy was the partial maintenance of their ancestral values which became highly operative for the economic interests of the colonisation (i.e. taxation and extraction of natural resources) and for the domination of the indigenous' built environment which entailed the foundation of cities from which the colonial power was administrated.

This favourable situation for the colonisers was due to the fact that the *Muisca*s, just as most of indigenous cultures in America, were organised by strong communitarian structures, whose leaders represented their entire lineage. In this regard, Guillén (1979: 31) underlines that, in contrast to the colonisers, the rights, duties and self-recognition of the natives came exclusively from real or fictitious kinship. Therefore sovereignty over land had no meaning for the *Muisca*s. In this context, authority came from the group itself and was exercised over it; hence there was no direct connection between the authority of a certain indigenous leader, and the occupation and defence of a physically defined territory. Moreover, the natives had a system of ritual donations to the *Cacique* or 'community-leader' that was well used by

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<sup>49</sup> In the case of the Conquest of America, the crown accepted the humanity of the natives and thus the indigenous population was subjected to tribute. Guillén (1979: 33) underlines that this circumstance expressed the political subordination of the natives within the same theoretical conditions of the inhabitants of the Spanish peninsula.

the colonisers and became highly effective for the colonial taxation<sup>50</sup> (i.e. the tax due to the *encomendero*).

The tension between the instrumental character of the *Muisca*'s values and the intended Christianization ended up reinforcing the contradiction between the missionary and extractive interests of the crown and its main institution i.e. the *encomienda* which had originally the mission of acculturating the natives and collecting the tributes. As a result, the *encomienda*'s implementation ended up subordinating the symbolic objectives to the economic goals. This subordination meant that despite the *encomendero*'s obligation of Christianising (individualising) and 'liberating' the native group, he pursued the partial survival of the indigenous structure but also caused the 'segregation' and subsequent "the fixing of the inner relations" of the *Muisca* population i.e. the hereditary limitation of natives' rights (Guillén, 1979: 59).

Consequently, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a specific structure of 'enforced association' to obtain power, wealth and prestige is successfully configured within the former *Muisca* territory. Such structure i.e. *La Encomienda* was dominated by the *encomendero* who were increasingly surrounded by a dependant population whose members (priests, foremen, former soldiers, new Spanish settlers, *Caciques* and minor bureaucrats) were related to each other by means of "authoritarian linkage" and "paternalist submission" (Guillén, 1979). Such relationship involved the will to share, with the privileged one (i.e. the *encomendero*), the 'absolute authority' i.e. the control over labour, the life and loyalty of the natives (who embodied the sole labour force) and the economic dominance of the colonial city. Such form of association ensured the complete or partial fulfilment of the symbolic need of 'idleness' as well as 'personal lucre' of the individual i.e. the essential aspects of the "Spanish nobility"<sup>51</sup> or *hidalguía hispánica* (Guillén, 1979: 33/73ff/117; Romero, 2004: 84ff) in which 'labour and individual effort' (e.g. agriculture, craftsmanship – the conversion of labour into

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<sup>50</sup> In fact, the colonisers wrongly interpreted the indigenous' system of ritual donations to the *Cacique* which was based on the belief that the individual is dependant, or a fragment 'of a whole'. For the Spanish, the tribute is due to a superior authoritarian figure - the king - which implies the idea of contributing individually to "a whole" (Guillén, 1979: 38). Regardless of the wrong interpretation of the meaning of the donation system, the figure of the *Cacique* became instrumental for the colonial taxation.

<sup>51</sup> Romero (2004: 84) calls attention to the fact that the cities of Spain and Portugal had achieved, as had the rest of European cities, their initial splendour on a mercantile basis, and with the development of an incipient bourgeoisie. Yet, the process of the Hispanic peninsula led to a particular polarization characterised by an extreme differentiation between the different social groups and the *señoralización* or 'nobilisation' of high bourgeois sectors.



symbols of power and wealth) were interpreted as signs of social inferiority. Thus, the social mobility within this structure does not have the aim of emancipation but pursues the usufruct of existing privileges disregarding prevailing categories of justice or injustice by means of the adhesion to paternalist values within a process of “mimetism” (Guillén, 1979: 101ff).

Thus, according to Guillén (1979), the *encomendero* acquires an enormous amount of ‘social power’ which is transformed into huge ‘political power’ that is obtained by capturing the unconditional loyalty of the ones who aspire to have it. In this manner, *La Encomienda* turns, within a rather short period of time, into almost the only economic, social and political association which not only rules all sorts of activities within its immediate territory (without any rural-urban tensions) but also determines social processes of other surrounding areas conquered by the crown. In doing so, *La Encomienda*’s power succeeds by restricting other forms of associations and by co-opting representatives positioned by the crown itself. This supremacy was reflected in *La Encomienda*’s clear domination of urban institutions e.g. the civil and ecclesiastic *Cabildos* (town councils) which effectively confronted royal institutions such as *La Real Audiencia* (the royal court) in order to safeguard the interests of the *encomendero* and of his relatives and of those individuals closest to him. Therefore, this powerful associative structure partakes in a decisive manner in the production of a colonial city-type that appears as an imposed noble and anti-bourgeois political entity whose traders and craftsmen lacked rights and socio-political power; hence, this type of city essentially differs from the bourgeois European urban creation (Guillén, 1979: 73ff/98f/111ff).

*Santafé* (later on, Bogotá) evolves as a paradigmatic example of this noble colonial city-type<sup>52</sup>. Its initial spatial structure expresses and resolves the tensions

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<sup>52</sup> From a continental standpoint, Romero (2004: 84ff/91ff) observes that there are two initial types of cities that coexist in the subcontinent: ‘noble’ and ‘mercantile’ cities. According to the Romero, noble cities were those in which viceroy courts, government seats and royal courts were established as well as in those where the *encomenderos* succeeded in expressing and consolidating their wealth e.g. Mexico City, Lima, Olinda, Santiago de Chile, Bogotá, Quito, Córdoba, Puebla, Guanajuato, Taxco, Morelia, Popayán, Tunja, Arequipa, Trujillo del Perú, among others. Mercantile cities, however, were ports and some military seats and miner centres whose function and social composition (traders and business men outnumbered the *encomenderos*) determined the accentuation of a bourgeois character e.g. Potosí, Havana, Cartagena, Veracruz, Acapulco, El Callao, Santo Domingo, Río de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Bahía, and others. Yet, the author points out that the noble and mercantile ways of life also coexisted in each city since noble sectors did not totally renounced to exploit the benefits of commerce, and mercantile-bourgeois groups never stopped wishing for the social status of idle groups.

between the missionary and economic goals of the colonisation. This structure involves the power struggle between *La Encomienda* and the crown. Additionally, subsequent spatial developments (within the nascent colonial network) tell us about the huge power acquired by its founders and *encomenderos* within a pretty short period of time.

To begin with, the city's spatial structure emerges through the establishment of two central spaces in 1538 within an indigenous crossroad area with local and regional importance for the *muiscas* territory. The first space was created through the establishment of a *castrum* (Martínez, 1976: 20ff) or *asiento* (i.e. a military transitory settlement in the Roman tradition) on an elevated area of a valley appropriated by the *Muisca*s. This area used to be called *Teusaquillo* by the *muiscas* and was the east end of a path that connected this area with *Bacatá*, a significant *muiscas* inhabited area located towards west. The establishment of the *castrum* entailed no military actions (hence a surrender without battle) and the cooperation of the *Muisca*s who took part in its establishment. In spite of being conceived strictly for defensive goals, the *castrum* was signified with a biblical number by building 12 *bohíos*. These native dwellings, along with *Teusaquillo*'s existing constructions, served as the first shelter for the Spanish army led by the lawyer Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. Thereafter, a representative of the Church asked Jiménez de Quesada to construct a *humilladero* (i.e. a sort of chapel that is typically located in a non-inhabited area) in order to host a mass that officialised the Spanish possession of the indigenous territory and to receive, "the king of kings in the *Zipa*'s (a *Muisca cacique*) kingdom" (Martínez, 1976: 39f). Consequently, the foundations of the *humilladero* were located at a conservative distance from the *castrum* (600m approx.) due to military norms, and in proximity to the indigenous crossroad area. Hence, the *humilladero* featured a random location but, with the emergence of *Santafé*'s spatial structure, it turned out to be situated in alignment with an urban axis of north-south trajectory.

This set of events occurred several months before the arrival of other Spanish troops led by experienced city founders (Sebastian de Belalcazar and Nicolás de Federman) who demanded rights over the territory. The conflict was solved through different negotiations. As a result, it was decided to found a city according to legal requisites and urban principles that had been applied up to that date to the whole continent i.e. the use of the orthogonal grid which had been established through a north-

south and an east-west axis following the *cardo* and *decumanus* logic<sup>53</sup>. The decision was taken based on two aspects: first, the belief that a strict city founding provided functional advantages to manage the colonial and missionary activities. Second, the interests of Belalcazar and Jiménez de Quesada who saw the foundation of the city as a medium of economic, political and symbolic recognition of the crown e.g. the payment for city-founding services to Belalcazar, and the consolidation of Jiménez de Quesada's aspirations of "nobility" (Martínez, 1976: 15ff).

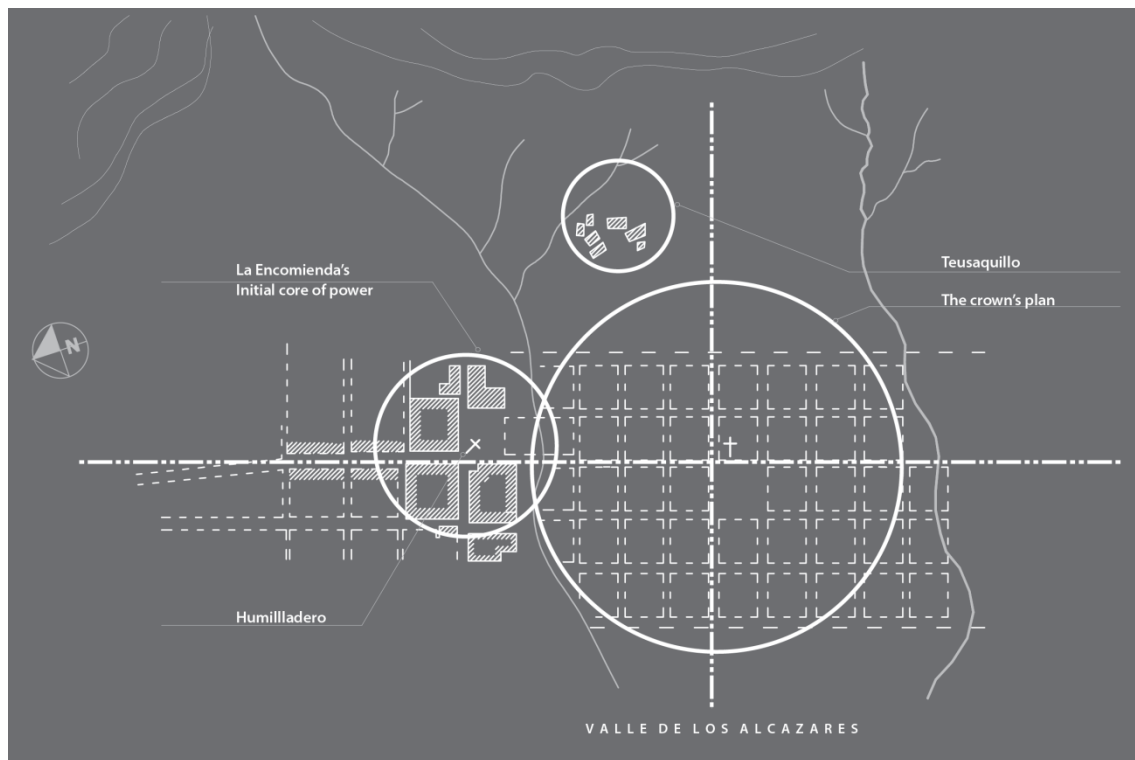
The establishment of the grid in 1539 was not implemented in a distant point within the highly populated *Muisca* valley, nor did it overlap with any of the initial central spaces i.e. the *castrum* or the *humilladero*. The grid was planned in proximity to these two central spaces. According to Martínez (1976: 28), this placement is explained by mere defensive and technical aspects i.e. the natural delimitation of existing topographical limits (the eastern mountain range, two rivers at the north and the south and a slight cliff at the west border) and other advantageous physical conditions (a slight inclination of the area which contributed to avoid potential floods etc.). Within his argumentation these conditions determined the central location of the central *plaza* within an "empty plain" that was situated nearby the *castrum* and the *humilladero*.

However, we identify further dimensions to take into account when approaching the establishing of the city's layout and primary spatial structure. From our perspective, focus should be directed towards the struggle for power and spatial-symbolic representation. This can be done by assessing historical facts from a semiotic perspective and contextualizing appropriation practices. In this regard, attention should be paid to the juxtaposition between the *humilladero* and the demarcated spatial layout (with its centrally located *plaza mayor*) that is expressed in the following figure:

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<sup>53</sup> According to Martínez (1976: 26), the orthogonal grid applied in *Santafé*, was first used by Nicolás de Ovando to found Santo Domingo (where Belalcazar once lived) and then accepted and regulated by the crown for the whole colonization process.

Fig. 26. Juxtaposition of spatial signs: the crown's plan and *La Encomienda*'s initial core of power



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Martínez (1976: 27)

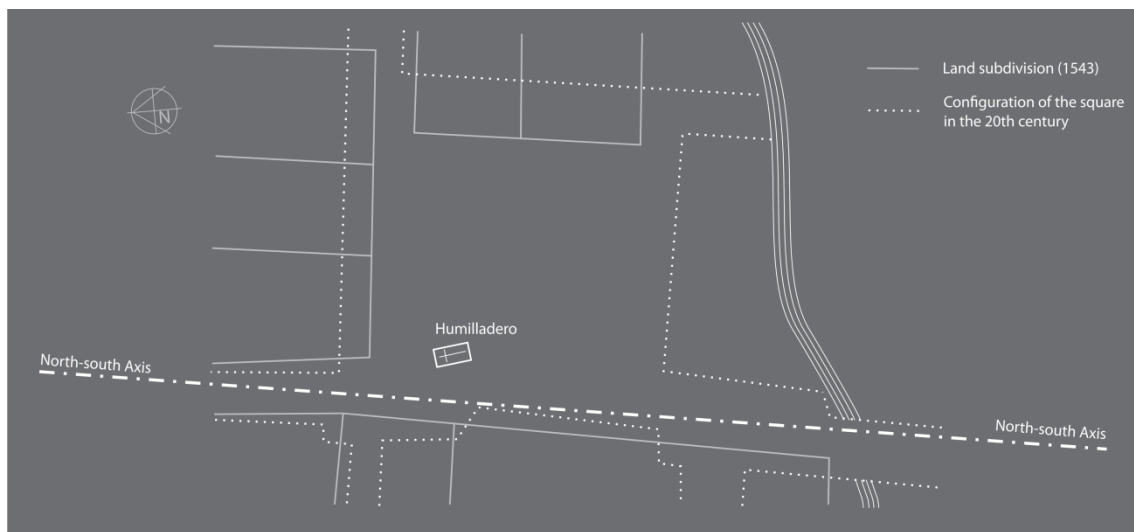
The spatial configuration expressed in the above figure, reflects the Hispanic group's initial and high interest for the area of the *humilladero* which acquired a hierarchical position as well as an advantageous situation in terms of accessibility before the arrival of Belalcazar and De Federman's troops. This presupposed the early use of this area for residential purposes, political-religious events (e.g. the *humilladero* functioned as the first city council) and other collective activities such as a sporadic market that occasionally included the native population<sup>54</sup>.

According to our theoretical framework, this phenomenon cannot be understood as an organic or natural process of spatial concentration around a place of exchange. The spot where the elementary construction of the *humilladero* (1538-1543) was placed should be primarily interpreted as a strong 'indexical signifier' of the locus of 'the authority to take possession of the land'. This 'authority to take possession of the land' is a signified connected to a (political) meaningful practice within the colonisation since it presupposed the interconnected noble and economic ambitions of the Hispanic group.

<sup>54</sup> See the historical texts that support this statement in Martínez (1976: 41ff).

The significance of the *humilladero*, from this perspective, emerges as a key socio-cultural factor of the initial spatial concentration dynamics that were organised around a point of sacred and secular characteristics (i.e. a typical pre-modern urban centrality characteristic). We refer to a central space that was preferred by dominant actors (e.g. the city founder his relatives and other *encomenderos*) in spite of the vastness of the occupied region, the pre-existing road infrastructure and availability of already appropriated meaningful spots (e.g. *Teusaquillo*). This preference involved the persistent struggle to acquire a plot at the *humilladero* and, to profit economically from different (legal as well as illegal) transactions related to this area<sup>55</sup> (see fig. 27). Regarding chronological descriptions, the indexical character of the *humilladero* turned into an iconic space defined by vertical spatial elements like the belfries of the *humilladero* and the succeeding quadrangular delimitation of its surroundings which quickly became a square highly functional to the emergent associative structure of *La Encomienda*.

Fig. 27. Land subdivision around the *humilladero* (circa 1543)



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Martínez (1976: 41)

It is then plausible to infer that the area of the *humilladero* triggered a strong sense of power and authority that withstood the potential overlapping of the orthogonal 'grid'<sup>56</sup>. This communication process involves a resistance to the main representation of

<sup>55</sup> This spatial practice becomes particularly significant considering that, within the initial colonial phase, the *encomenderos* could only own urban plots. This aspect will be developed further below.

<sup>56</sup> The overlapping of the grid over previous central spaces was a usual strategy within the colonization process. For instance, see the case of Lima's grid and its eccentric *plaza*.

space of the radical socio-spatial “homogenization” project of the crown”<sup>57</sup>. Considering this idea, the juxtaposition between the place of the *humilladero*, the grid with its *plaza mayor* and the *castrum* is not a mere random spatial effect, as Martínez (1976: 28) implies. In his interpretation the author overlooks the fact that the distribution of the two main central spaces (i.e. the area of the *humilladero* and the *plaza mayor*) were rationally organized through the north-south axis, which is a fundamental referential sign (a sort of index) of ‘the location of power and authority’.

Therefore, the arrangement expressed in fig. 26 tells us that the crown’s prime representation of space (i.e. the grid) was physically applied, but also that it only partially accomplished its main objectives i.e. to obliterate pre-existent indigenous spaces e.g. *Bacatá* and rearrange ‘spontaneous’ socio-spatial configurations built within the colonisation e.g. the place of the *humilladero* or *Teusaquillo*. Within the pre-existing conditions, the applied grid became subordinated to the dominant spatial sign (i.e. the place of the *humilladero*) of the emerging socio-spatial order - *La Encomienda*. Additional facts confirm such subordination. For instance, whilst the *humilladero*’s placement quickly became the well-known *plazuela de la yerba* and it hosted the royal court (which according to the colonial urban code was supposed to be located at the *plaza mayor*) as well as the *encomenderos*’ residences; the area projected as the *plaza mayor* (along with its first cathedral that was located at the vertex of the north-south east-west axes of the grid) was used for many years as a pasturing field. In this regard, the characterisation of the place of the *humilladero* as, “the first satellite neighbourhood” (Martínez, 1976: 41) of the city is mistaken since this description confers central qualities to the delineated *plaza mayor* which, even though, it was marked with the modest cathedral, it remained meaningless in many respects to the prevailing social group that persisted in appropriating the area around the *humilladero*.

In sum, the initial urban centrality configuration of *Santafé* was characterised by a ‘logic of accumulation’ that converged due to a spatial sign i.e. the *humilladero* used to concentrically organise the emerging socio-spatial order and comprise the social,

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<sup>57</sup> We propose the notion of “main representation of space” based on the fact that the use of the grid came from the actual foundation of the first cities in the continent as well as from its subsequent political (royal) instrumentalization. This definition is also related to Rama’s (2004) and Romero’s (2004) reflections which portray the colonial urban network and the colonial city as the signs of “the dream of an order” (Rama, 2004: 35), of an “extreme ideology”, and of the “delirium” (Romero, 2004: 14) of creating a new, compact and homogeneous society whose differentiation was forbidden and that was commanded to follow all actions and reactions of the metropolitan world.

political and religious spheres. This sort of configuration renders the main iconic sign of power of the colonial project to be peripheral (i.e. the applied grid), yet, in a way the placement of the *humilladero* ends up profiting symbolically from the established linear connection with the projected *plaza mayor*. From this perspective, the initial spatial structure of *Santafé* appears as a product of the contradictions between the (economic/symbolic) goals of the colonial project as well as of the representational needs of *La Encomienda*<sup>58</sup>.

However, the grid's subordinated condition did not last. By the 1550s, the power acquired by the *encomenderos* of *Santafé* was strong enough to influence royal and papal decisions in America (Guillén, 1979: 93ff). As a result, *Santafé* received the total political power over huge regions that constituted The New Kingdom of Granada (*Nuevo Reyno de Granada*). This reception involved an increased presence of the royal authority and the compliance with rules of colonisation, including urban codes.

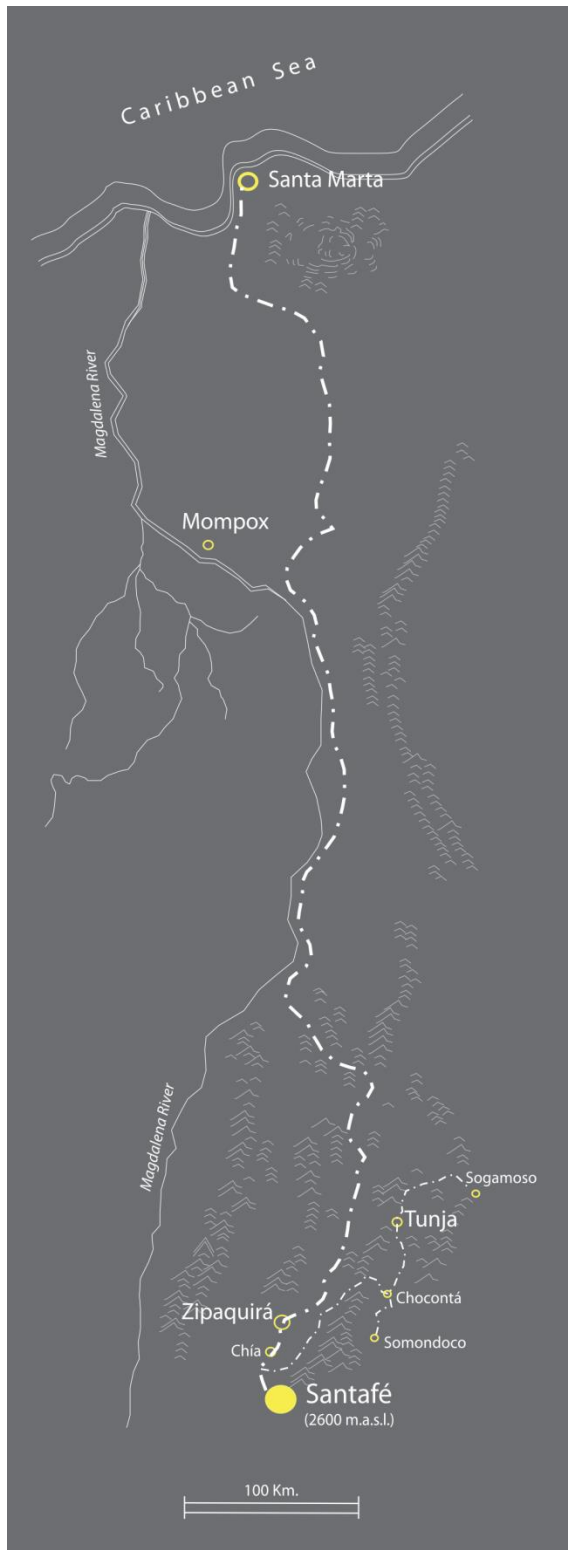
This socio-spatial shift supposed transformations that enhanced the true political and noble character of the city. In the context of the nascent international mercantilism, it is worth underlining that the city of *Santafé* was geographically isolated (located at 2600m over the sea level and quite distant from rivers and coasts). Despite this fact, *Santafé* conditioned ports (e.g. Cartagena and Santa Marta) as well as mining cities (such as Popayán and other cities located in the regions of Antioquia or Chocó) and wrested the original ecclesiastic and political hierarchy of these cities. The numerous and sedentary indigenous population (the *muisca*s) under the figure of the *encomienda* ensured socio-economic stability in spite of *Santafé*'s relative decoupling from international trade. In this context a strong noble economy evolved. *Santafé* became the New Kingdom's import centre of goods manufactured in Europe where, in spite of the vast labour force provided by the *muisca*s, the tribute (i.e. all sorts of labour, money, contributions in kind) was never enough to cover the needs of the Hispanic idle population<sup>59</sup>. In spatial terms, the relocation of the political and ecclesiastic power during this intense period defined the city's regional hierarchy and a linear-concentric pattern which characterises Bogotá's spatial structure then and now.

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<sup>58</sup> Hence, we oppose Martínez' interpretation in which *Santafé*'s first spatial configuration is assumed as an expression of aspects such as the "inadvertency of proper urban colonial prerequisites" or the "civic spirit and altruism of the colonisers" (Martínez, 1976: 41ff).

<sup>59</sup> See details about the taxation of *Santafé*'s region in Guillén (1979: 65ff).

Fig. 28. Routes and distances between ports and the political core of *Santafé*



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Martínez (1976:16)

The linear-concentric pattern relates to the particular relationship between the emerging structure of *La Encomienda* and the strengthened presence of the crown's



power in *Santafé* during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The new political status inferred the presence of royal institutions (principally the royal court and the new cathedral which functioned as ecclesiastic town hall) at the *plaza mayor*, according to the colonial urban code as well as the forced move of the market from *La Plazuela de la Yerba* to this square. These alterations prescribed the traditional concentric pattern organized through the grid and its central *plaza*. However, this precondition did not mean the end of *La Plazuela de la Yerba*'s spatial hierarchy which was maintained through the already established socio-political structure. Two events corroborate *La Encomienda*'s influence in this regard: first, the maintenance for several decades of the civic city hall in an *encomendero*'s residence at the *Plazuela de la Yerba* and the related placement of the Franciscan religious order within this core<sup>60</sup>. Second, the establishment of strict urban measures to regulate the quadrangular form of the *plazuela* (i.e. an iconic feature of power within the colonisation) and ensure the refrainment of the competition for land around the *humilladero* in a way that favoured powerful *encomenderos*' properties, etc.<sup>61</sup>

As a result, there were two strong centres semiotically and spatially arranged through the grid's north-south axis i.e. the main indexical sign of the location of power and authority. Upon this axis, the city's main street evolved and quickly acquired local and regional prevalence over the east-west axis. This hierarchy was reinforced via functional and morphological aspects. Within *Santafé*'s grid the north-south streets were wider than the streets oriented in east-west direction. Moreover, the front and entrance to each plot were aligned to the main streets i.e. the ones with north-south orientation. Thus, the spatial convention of linearity defined much of the city's dynamic. The main street, which later on became the *Calle Real del Comercio*, functioned as the city's main regional connection within the conquered *Muisca* territory. Most religious orders and educational institutions settled along this axis where elementary constructions were already prohibited in the 1550s. In this context, *La Plazuela de la Yerba* functioned as the city's main entrance and was labelled as *Mundonuevo* (new world). Nevertheless, this condition did not mean that the east-west orientation had no functional or semiotic relevance. Along the east-west axis several spatial elements were organised (e.g. chapels, convents and other *plazuelas* or secondary squares that were promoted by

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<sup>60</sup> This order received the *encomenderos*' economic support and educated their progeny. The main temple of the Franciscan order remains in the same place up to the present day.

<sup>61</sup> In this regard see historical texts quoted in Martínez (1976: 43f)

influential city inhabitants) including the entrance to the city (*the plazuela de San Victorino*) from the new kingdom's distant fluvial and maritime connections. It is worth noting that this hierarchical difference between the two axes does express the dominance of inner territorial relations over those related to the emerging mercantilist world which are key characteristics of the noble character of the economy during this period and of the reproduction of the associative structure of *La Encomienda*.

At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *Santafé*'s essential urban centrality configuration of linear-concentric character is spatially defined and politically demarcated through an administrative division that were established, along with the gradual construction of the different spatial elements and arrangements, principally, 5 chapels, 4 churches, 3 convents, 2 institutional buildings, 2 *plazuelas*, 2 native towns or *pueblos de indios* (one of them was *Puebloviejo* which evolved from the former *castrum*), a hospital and a cemetery. In this sense, the city was constituted by three parishes which organized the civil administration in four different neighbourhoods: *Santa Bárbara* – south-east; *Las Nieves* – north; *San Victorino* – west; *La Catedral* - centre.

Fig. 29. *Santafé*'s linear-concentric configuration (circa 1600)



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Martínez (1976: 45)

### 5.1.2. Second moment: Authoritarianism, mimetism and the reproduction of 'spatial nobility'

The second moment of pre-modern urban centrality is defined by the consolidation of *La Hacienda* as the new dominant communitarian associative structure which is a phenomenon related to the crisis and decline of *La Encomienda*. This situation entailed the enhancement of *Santafé*'s 'presentative characteristics' inherited from the previous period within a process of spatial concentration and expansion.

The evolvement of *La Hacienda* is the outcome of a 'demographic revolution' that involved a process of transculturation during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries but that did not involve any transformation in the prevailing mode of production (Guillén, 1979: 126/139/202). This phenomenon was not restricted to the local sphere. It is inscribed in the formation of a new 'creole society' in Latin America which, according to Romero (2004: 123), is a process that coincides with the mercantilist impact in the region i.e. the growth of internal markets in spite of the monopolist regime maintained by the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms. In this context, Romero (2004) and Guillén (1979) underline the prevalence of strong internal processes over external influences and claim the end of the duality composed by colonisers and colonised, and observe the subsequent formation of powerful entrenched social groups in the subcontinent.

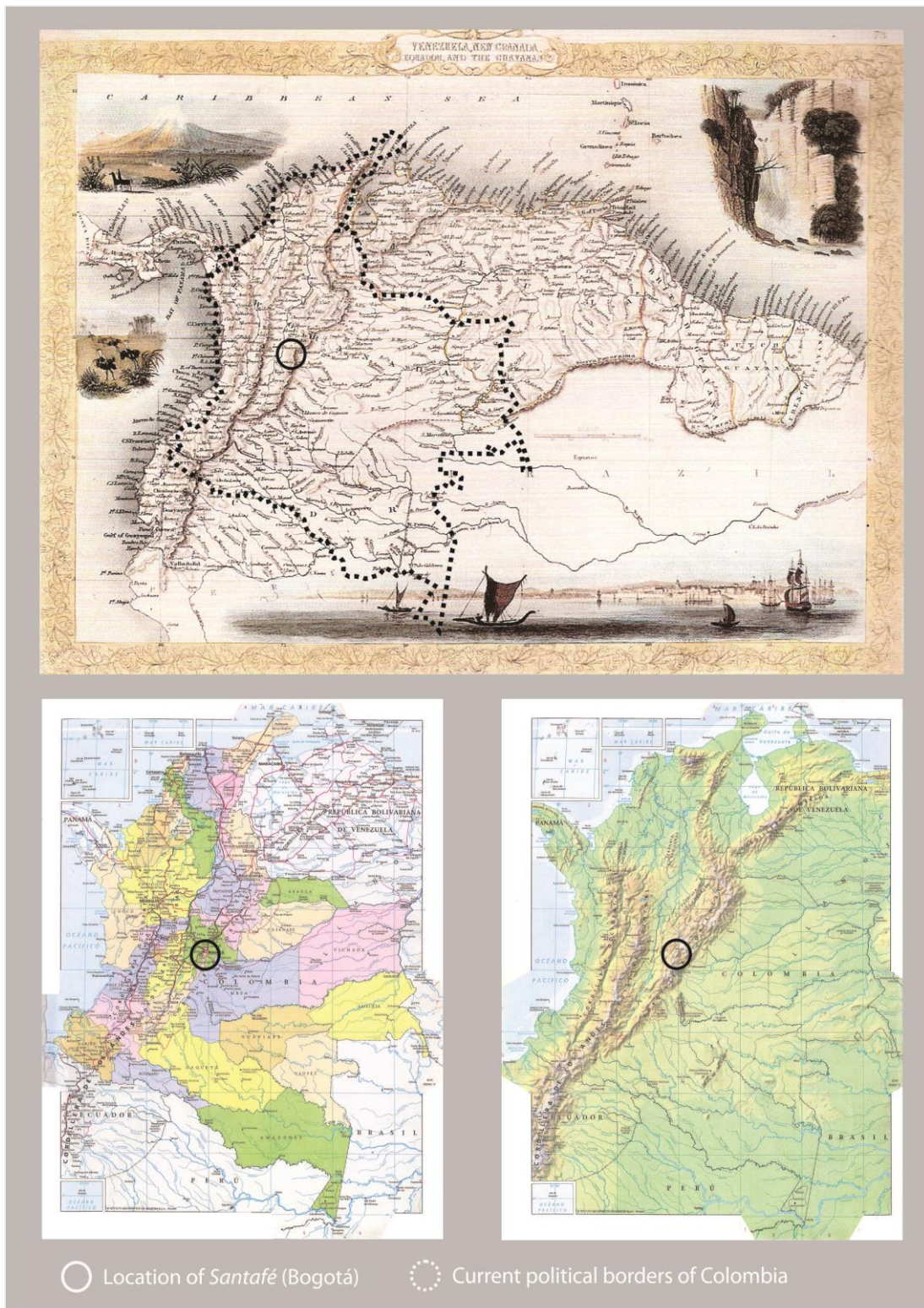
The particularities of this process in the New Kingdom of Granada and in Bogotá (as a major seat of power) had to do with the crisis of *La Encomienda*. This crisis is driven by the native's (mainly *muiscas*) struggle to adopt the Hispanic system of values. The main strategy was the socio-cultural mixing since this condition ensured emancipation because only 'pure natives' were subjected to the figure of the *encomienda*. At the same time, those who controlled power (i.e. the control over labour, life and loyalty of indigenous population as well as the dominion over the city) combined different strategies to maintain their dominant position. This change in collective strategies was due to the fact that by the mid of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the reduction of indigenous population started to seriously affect the tribute, and therefore the way of life of the idle Hispanic population<sup>62</sup>. Principally, the strategies to maintain power

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<sup>62</sup> By 1778, such reduction was evident since the white and creole group represented 70% of the population (645,162 people) of the Viceroyalty of New Granada i.e. the former New Kingdom of Granada. The 30% left (181,389 people) were distributed between natives and black slaves. It is worth noting that the augmentation of 'free population' was also evident on the continental scale. By that time



Fig. 30. New Kingdom of Granada and current physical and political map of Colombia



Source: Own elaboration based on *Historia de Bogotá. Tomo I. Conquista y Colonia*

there were about 15 million inhabitants in Spanish-America, of which only 200,000 were Europeans and the rest of the population was composed by creoles and the different castes (Romero, 2004: 123).

consisted of the substitution of the diminished native population by creole people (which was not subjected to tribute), the importation of black slaves from Africa to the regions where the figure of the *encomienda* failed<sup>63</sup>, and finally, the persistent negation of urban rights to traders and craftsmen.

This conflicting situation entailed a strong social pressure around the property of 'land'. Land was not only an essential element for the survival of most of the population, but also a key element to achieve emancipation due to its semiotic characteristics. As mentioned above, the ownership of 'land' in the Iberian society meant 'grandeur' and 'cleanness' of blood. Therefore, the ownership of land became an instrument of liberation since it provided 'prestige and social power' as well as the maintenance and reproduction of noble values. In this context, the increasing masses of emancipated population as well as the former *encomenderos* struggled to obtain land and labour force. Yet, this struggle combined contrasting realities. While the new 'free' population fought to ensure its liberation and differentiate themselves from their native ancestors, the former *encomenderos* pursued to maintain their social power by owning rural land because they had no rights over the natives' land (only over their life) during the initial colonial period and could only own urban plots. Thus, the subsequent shift in the property of land was not related to any "sudden agrarian technological change or capitalist use of surplus value" (Guillén, 1979: 134), but to the emergence of practices that allowed "the subordination" [of] "new emancipated individuals" (Guillén, 1979: 140).

The general dynamic around the ownership of land consisted of obtaining titles over rural land that were vacant or already occupied by natives or the new emancipated population. This dynamic was mainly achieved through the payment of ridiculously low prices to the crown. This situation was made possible since the institution responsible for the land distribution i.e. the town hall (*cabildo*) was already captured by dominant groups and provided titles only to former *encomenderos*. The main outcome was the emergence of great landlords or *hacendados*. These *hacendados* became the only

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<sup>63</sup> This refers to the regions where the native population were exterminated or driven away e.g. the areas located within the current provinces of Huila, Valle, Tolima, Santander and Antioquia. Alternatively, the areas where the figure of the *encomienda* was very successful are located in the current provinces or *departamentos* of Cundinamarca and Boyacá.

figures that were able to ‘compose’<sup>64</sup> or organise the ‘illegal’ occupation of numerous smallholders (*vecinos*) who are forced to negotiate either buying or maintaining archaic relationships as tenants, sharecroppers, or *agregados*. Guillén (1979: 140f) points out that even those who managed to pay a small landholding were forced, by the social structure, to provide the *hacendado* a very wide range of services (whether or not paid in cash or kind) which did not really differ from those provided by the native population to the *encomendero*. Subsequently, the dependence of the smallholder is based on diverse facts. Primarily, the small landholding was not enough for the survival of its many occupants. Secondly, essential benefits such as the access to the markets, the relation to official authorities, or the defence against the abuses of other landlords rested on the *hacendado*’s whim. Thus, even in the case of a full ownership of land, the smallholder ended up associated to the new great *hacienda* (farm) and turned into a pawn or worker who enjoys an illusory freedom. The spatial product of this situation was an arrangement composed by huge properties surrounded by small landholding whose numerous populations, far from being a simple labour force, entailed an abundant, dependant and submissive social base which supported the *hacendado*’s (i.e. the former *encomendero*) social power (Guillén, 1979: 107ff). Thus, the final result is the configuration of a new type of authoritarian and paternalist associative structure identified as *La Hacienda* which deeply influenced space production.

According to Guillén (1979) *La Hacienda*, as dominant structure, succeeds in ‘directing and limiting social mobility’ and therefore impedes the evolvement of alternative associative structures (e.g. those of craftsmen and traders) via social and political control<sup>65</sup> despite the crown’s efforts to promote their effective creation and regulation according to the ideas that were prevalent in Spain within the *Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País*<sup>66</sup> (Guillén, 1979: 140/161). This situation is

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<sup>64</sup> The legal concept used at that time was called *composiciones* which refers to the act of putting together or arranging something. See Guillén (1979: 139).

<sup>65</sup> Firstly, social control was exercised through the loyalty to noble values since it was a medium of upward social mobility and emancipation. This situation reproduced the social hatred for mechanical occupations and of economic lucre produced from them. Moreover, the secular clergy supported this social control through the institutionalization of *La Hacienda*’s values e.g. the encouragement of fidelity to the landlord or *patrón* (*hacendado*). This association between a sector of the church and *La Hacienda* had a practical sense because the secular clergy also struggled (with success) for vacant land and therefore depended on the former *encomenderos*’ power. Secondly, political control was a product of the social power of *la Hacienda* which had a historical dominium of city halls and therefore was able to negate rights to local traders and craftsmen.

<sup>66</sup> These associations played a key role in Spain to introduce the ‘scientific ideas’ promoted in France during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

particularly relevant since it occurred within an age of moderated royal reform influenced by the Enlightenment that were aimed at ‘readjusting the structures without modifying them’ through ‘rationally elaborated decisions’ i.e. the accentuation of royal power in America based on the idea that nothing could oppose the King’s decisions because the monarch “embodied reason itself” (Romero, 2004: 145f/150f). Thus the local power is embodied in *La Hacienda* and directed by an ‘entrenched Creole oligarchy’<sup>67</sup>. The members of this sort of oligarchy were *hacendados* and *doctores*, who effectively confronted the crown just as the *encomenderos* did in the previous period.

This situation entailed that, in spite of the general mercantilist context, *Santafé* remained as the main core for decision making, as the residence of dominant families, and finally, as the main educational centre where upcoming generations of landlords were taught the required skills to occupy key civil and religious bureaucratic positions. Hence, vital ports of the Viceroyalty, such as Cartagena, paradoxically continued to be subjected to *Santafé*’s political power. Moreover, import trade (managed by Hispanic sectors) acquired more importance in order to cover the dominant social groups consumption needs, which were composed of the majority of religious and secular functionaries of the Viceroyalty. This condition made *Santafé* the main consumption centre of the region at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Guillén, 1979: 116/157ff). Therefore, the secondary character of the city’s economic life is not a product of backwardness, but an outcome of a conflict for power in which creoles and natives became relegated to a traditional servile condition (which included domestic services in urban and rural residences) and to develop craftsmanship and commercial activities in small scale in basic shops (*tiendas*) in the city.

Consequently, this period ends up being characterised by the reproduction of spatial nobility through “*La Hacienda*’s absolute power” (Guillén, 1979: 240). This

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<sup>67</sup> By introducing the term ‘entrenched Creole oligarchy’ we differ from characterisations that tend to equalize the concept of ‘urban’ with the notion of ‘bourgeois’. Therefore, Romero’s (2004: 124) generalisation of urban elites in the subcontinent through the notion of ‘creole bourgeoisie’ is not adopted in this case. In turn, we prioritize Guillén’s (1979) description which, on the one hand, underlines the political dimension and identifies the oligarchical character of the (noble) elite, and on the other hand, differentiates between urban societies characterised by significant bourgeois sectors (e.g. Mompox and Cartagena which historically developed commercial activities and were permeated by the ideas of the European Enlightenment) and those which even though they saw the formation of a mercantile group, remained essentially noble, such as with the example of *Santafé*, where the number of autonomous economic individuals, smallholders who could subsist by exploiting their property, or free craftsmen were insignificant. However, Romero’s (2004) notion of ‘social entrenchment’ associated to the demographic growth, the mixing generations and the prevalence of members of dominant families is considered within our conceptualisation.

involves two fundamental aspects: first, the confirmation of *Santafé*'s predominant spatial hierarchy which entailed the dominance of a 'political-authoritarian power' that annulled and subordinated surrounding regions and cities, whose socio-spatial structures were characterised by production and exchange processes i.e. by manufacturer and commerce; and second, the achievement of the political emancipation from Spain according to *La Hacienda*'s values<sup>68</sup>.

*Santafé*'s spatial structure during this period communicates the alliance, as well as the traditional struggle for social power and political control between the oligarchic elite that directed *La Hacienda* and the crown i.e. 'socio-spatial authoritarianism'. In this regard we underline the fact that royal measures informed by 'rational' representations of space were strongly conditioned by the noble socio-spatial configuration that was inherited from the previous period dominated by *La Encomienda*. A key example is the administrative division of *Santafé* ordered in 1774 by King Carlos

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<sup>68</sup> A key actor within this process was the elite composed of *hacendados* and *doctores* as mentioned above. With regard to this powerful group it is important to note that, regardless of their apparent submissive attitude in relation to the Viceroy and the royal court, their command of *La Hacienda* and dominium over city halls gave them the opportunity to "coerce viceregal authorities or to confront them successfully" (Guillén, 1979: 202). Thus, before this elite had external ideological rationalisations (e.g. the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America or the text in French of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen) at their disposal, subversive activities were intended against the viceregal power with the support of exporting and importer merchants from Mompox and Cartagena who were hindered by the mercantilist regulations of Madrid. This scenario became a temporary alliance of two opposing groups whose main objective was to "annul and substitute" (Guillén, 1979: 232) viceregal representatives and not to achieve an independence from the king: first, the powerful oligarchies of *Santafé*, Tunja, and Popayán; and second, the craftsmen and traders of the city of Socorro who belonged to a region where the figure of the *encomienda* was not successful and where a particular structure developed in opposition to *La Hacienda*'s authoritative and paternalist values.

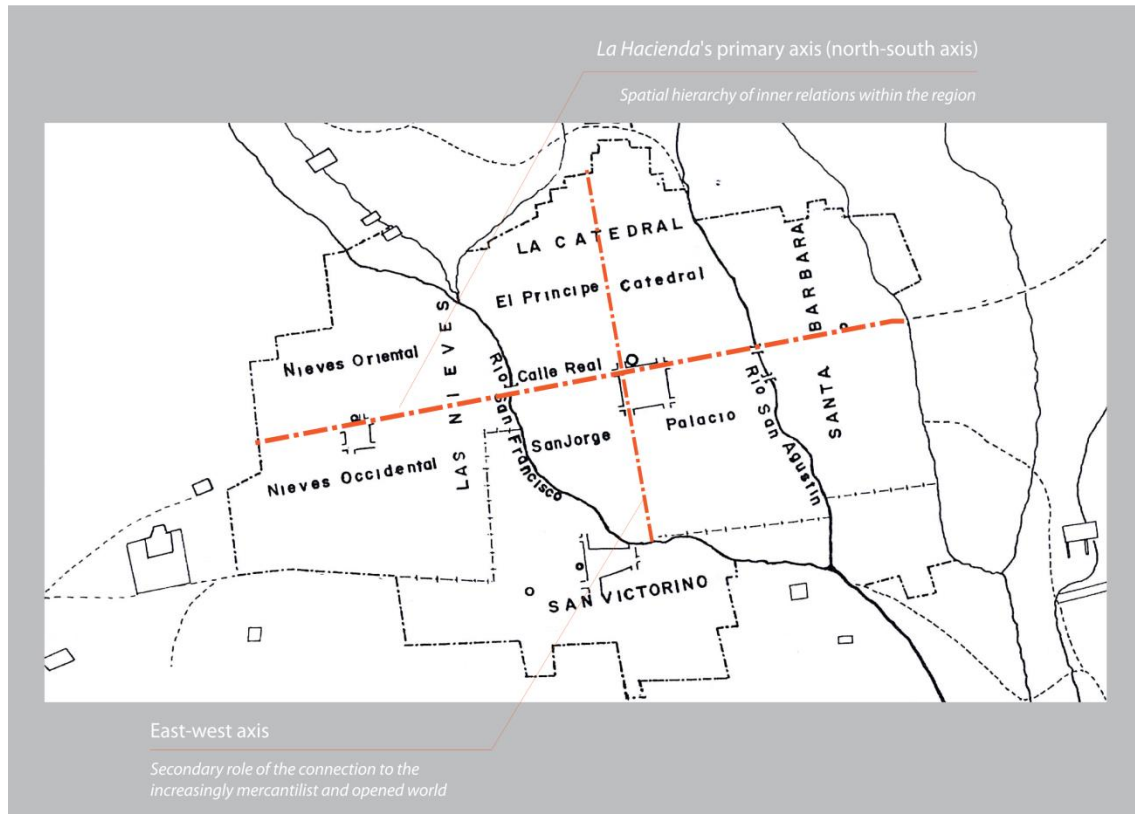
However, *La Hacienda* could not 'capture' the subversive activities and therefore provisionally supported royal authorities, who in this context were convinced of the fact that, "the true source of political dominion and social influence was the absolute control already exercised by the *hacendados*" (Guillén, 1979: 233). This sudden action led by the *hacendados* and *doctores* avoided the rise of the strong collective power of *El Común* originated in Socorro. This move of powerful actors entailed the obstruction of the occupation of *Santafé* by the *comuneros* and the elaboration of the capitulations after the revolt of 1781 that was automatically annulled by viceregal authorities and followed by a strong repression.

Finally, the independence or political emancipation from the crown during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted from a process in which *La Hacienda* succeeds in capturing Socorro's communitarian structure and Mompox' and Cartagena's merchant groups within a constant subversive activity run by the *doctores* and *hacendados* of the central region of the Viceroyalty (particularly, by the elite that dominated the city hall of *Santafé* and that confronted the royal *oidores*). This 'capturing' was possible because the *socorranos* were already weakened after the revolt of 1781 and *La Hacienda*'s elite took advantage of their separatist feelings. Furthermore, the traders from Mompox and Cartagena could only articulate to political power via subordination since they had no possibility of developing successful associations. This situation was reinforced by the fact that these traders shared immediate economic interests (mainly, the abolition of the crown's mercantilist obstacles) as well as family ties with *Santafé*'s dominant groups. In this context, ideological rationalizations (mainly the translation to Spanish and distribution of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen) and military actions of remarkable ideological figures such as Simón Bolívar turned out to be only instrumental for the interest of prevailing groups. See Guillén (1979: 239ff).



III, which was applied by Viceroy Guirior. Such official act followed the traditional linear-concentric pattern that emphasized the inner relations of the territory instead of the spatial connection to the increasingly mercantilist world.

Fig. 31. Reinforcing noble urban centrality: *La Hacienda's* primary axis versus the secondary east-west axis for remote communication



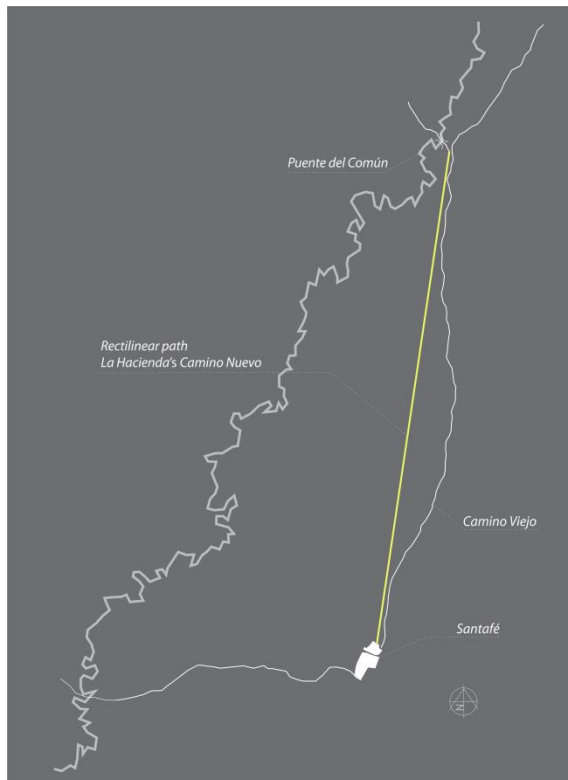
Source: Own elaboration. Based on Martínez (1976: 52)

The reaffirmation of royal power neither re-coded the city's spatial structure nor emphasized the east-west axis i.e. the axis which pointed towards the main fluvial and maritime ports of the Kingdom. Conversely, the authoritarian and oppressive character of *Santafé's* space was boosted, firstly, by reusing the foundational crossed axes (i.e. the main indexical sign of the location of colonial authority) to distribute the city into *cuarteles* and *barrios* governed by 4 main mayors (*señores oidores*) and 8 neighbourhood mayors; and secondly, by upholding the north-south axis which pointed towards the inner regions and cities dominated by *La Hacienda*. The quarters organised through the north-south axis were bigger and the length of their main streets doubled the size of the spatial arrangements organised through the east-west axis. Moreover, the north-south axis arranged the *Plaza Mayor* and the *Plazuela de San Francisco* i.e. former place of the *humilladero*. When looking closer to the detailed plans presented by

Martínez (1976: 73ff) it is possible to count about 44 spatial referents along the north-south axis (including key institutions for the reproduction of *La Hacienda* e.g. churches, schools, *plazuelas*, convents, fountains, etc.) whilst the east-west axis presents about 21. It is also worth calling attention to the fact the northern part of the city was already larger (5 neighbourhoods) than the southern section (3 neighbourhoods).

Moreover, a further enhancement of *Santafé's* north-south axis took place through the modification of the regional road network that converged in the city. It was achieved by a true 'rational' intervention: a rectilinear path of approximately 28 km long constructed in 1789 by viceregal orders that connected the north access of the city (i.e. the area of the *San Diego* convent which is connected through the city's main street to the *plaza mayor* and to the *plazuela de San Francisco* – former place of the *humilladero*) with a new bridge (the current *Puente del Común*) that improved the communication of *Santafé* with the main centres dominated by *La Hacienda* and the region of Socorro which, according to Guillén (1979: 235), became subjected to the social values promoted by the oligarchical elite and viceregal power after the intended rebellion of 1781.

Fig. 32. Enhancement of *La Hacienda's* axis



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Carrasquilla (1987: 193)

Therefore, the introduction of the spatial convention of linearity is of semiotic and functional interest from this period onwards. On the one hand, the 28km path can be interpreted as a spatial sign of iconic and indexical character related to a period characterised by the accentuation of ‘authoritarianism’. This is a form of power exercised by the remote monarchical influence in times of the Enlightenment, but strongly conditioned by the social power of *La Hacienda*. In this context, whilst the road’s main qualities (i.e. linearity and length) tell us about its iconic dimension which denotes ‘rationality’; its spatial contiguity to *Santafé* makes this road a strong indexical sign of the location of ‘power’ (a sort of arrow). On the other hand, the construction of the path complemented the accessibility to the city from key vicinities dominated by *La Hacienda*.

Up to that date the city was accessible from the northern regions mainly through a path that dated back to the Pre-Columbian and *La Encomienda*’s period and that followed the sinuous topography of the mountain range (*cerros orientales*) that define the east border of the city. As a result, there were two accessing paths at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the sinuous *Camino Viejo* (old path) produced by *La Encomienda*, and the rectilinear *Camino Nuevo* (new path) produced by *La Hacienda*. These new accessibility conditions not only confirmed the spatial hierarchy of the northern section of the city but also prefigured its future linear expansion.

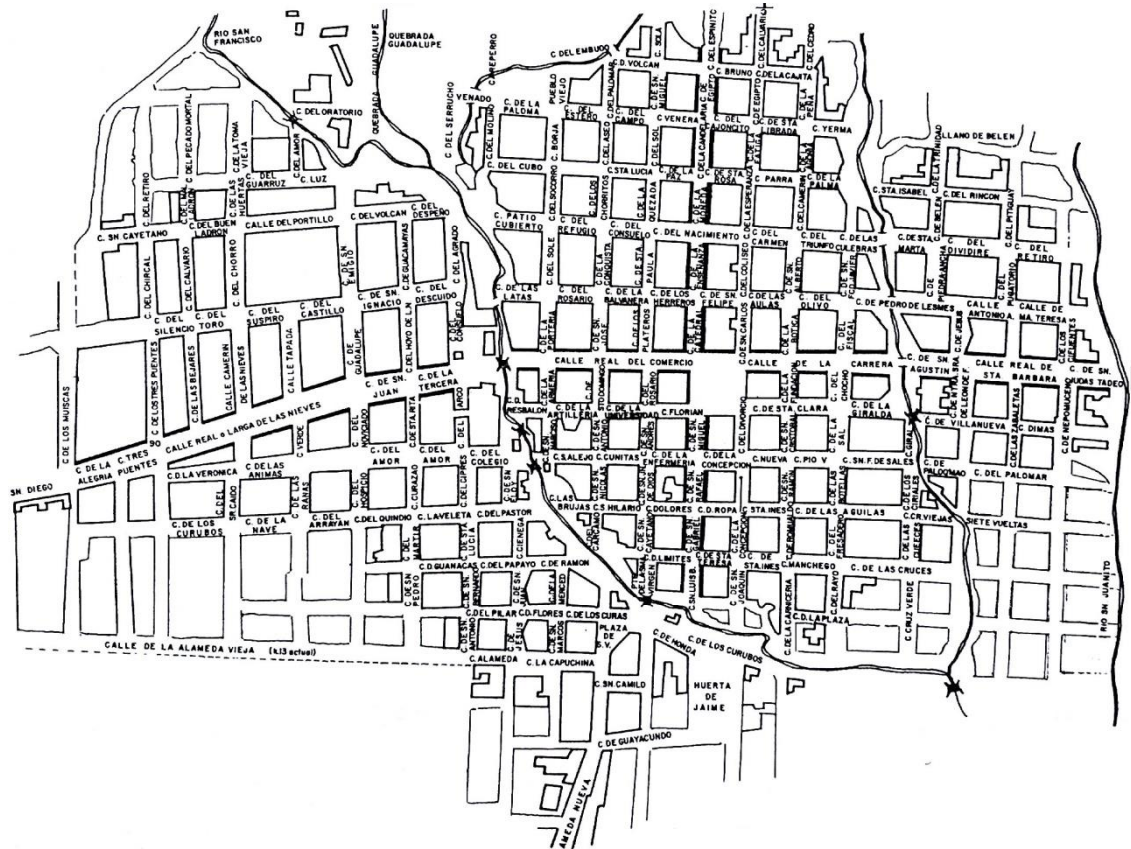
Complementary processes and spatial signs contributed to enhance the noble ‘presentative characteristics’ of *Santafé*. On the one hand, the physical and demographic “densification and expansion”<sup>69</sup> (Martinez, 1976; Romero, 2004) reinforced and consolidated the grid as organising pattern as well as spatial elements such as streets, squares, blocks, etc. This consolidation was confirmed through the first official street-labelling of Bogotá’s urban history, where the already mentioned north-south spatial hierarchy, can be observed. On the other hand, we identify the creation of a further powerful iconic that reinforced the noble arrangement of *Santafé* in this period, and dominates visually up to the present the cityscape. This sign is composed by a church and a chapel (accompanied with a sacral sculpture) that were built on the top of two

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<sup>69</sup> At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century *Santafé* had about 1,000 inhabitants. By 1774 the city reached 16,000 inhabitants within its built area. More than 3,000 people resided in the immediate surroundings of the city (See Martínez, 1976: 51). Some years later Bogotá had about 20,000 inhabitants. By that time there were cities in the region with 100,000 (Salvador de Bahía, Mexico City) 60,000 (Lima) 40,000 (Santiago de Chile, Rio de Janeiro, Caracas and Buenos Aires) and 10,000 (Asunción and Montevideo) inhabitants (Romero, 2004: 144f).

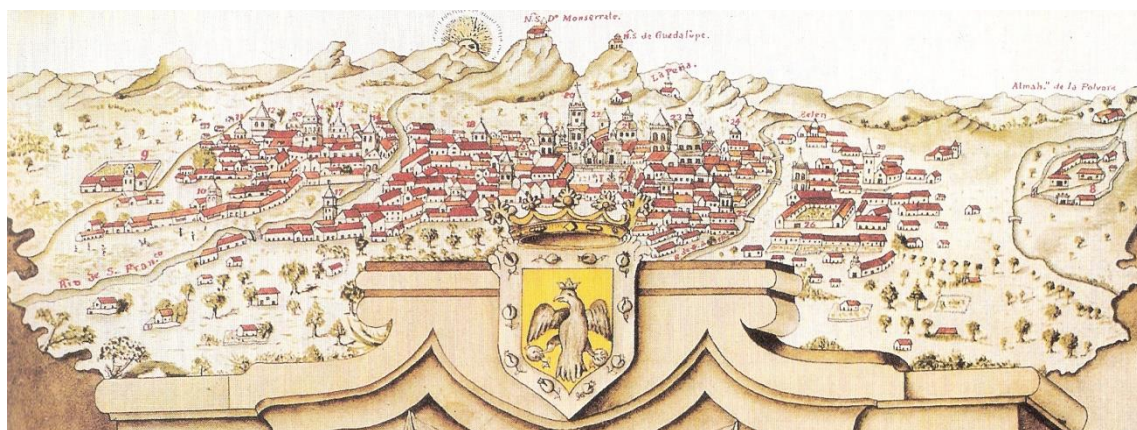
peaks (*Monserate* and *Guadalupe*) whose height reach about 600 metres and are located right next to Bogotá's foundational centre.

Fig. 33. First street-labelling



Source: Martinez (1976: 72). Slightly modified

Fig. 34. Representation of *Santafé* (Bogotá) in 1772



Source: D. Joseph Aparicio Morata. *Museo de Bogotá* Collection.  
Note the presence of the peaks *Monserate* and *Guadalupe*

Likewise, spatial practices were conditioned by *La Hacienda*'s authoritarianism and its related noble values which directed and limited social mobility. Initially, *La Hacienda*'s authoritarianism evolves from the unstable condition of the new emancipated population that is doomed to the *hacendado*'s arbitrary whim. This condition includes the obtainability of land and the kind of insertion in social life. This condition engendered a set of "mimetic needs" (Guillén, 1979: 153) of the emancipated population that ended up consolidating the noble values and social power of the *hacendado*. Therefore, spatial practices characterised by 'mimetism' became the rule in everyday life. Consequently, a considerable sector of the emancipated population (i.e. creole, white *vecinos* or natives with land) attempted to own and impose noble expressions and the values of their *patrones* or bosses *hacendados*. This imposition was achieved through "increasing institutionalised violence," (Guillén, 1979: 153) and turned into a prerequisite to accomplish a symbolic integration to upper social sectors. This practice emerged as a means for maintaining the way open towards upward social mobility which, in that context, meant freedom and social power to obtain rights.

This phenomenon acquired particular importance within the urban context and involved the collective appropriation of the spatial structure of the city. As such, it is worth mentioning that the relationship between 'authoritarianism and mimetism' in the dominant regions of the Viceroyalty of New Granada coincides with the 'unstable character' of the nascent Latin American urban 'creole society' identified by Romero (2004). The author detects that in the subcontinent there was a "run against reality," (Romero, 2004: 141) meant to salvage the wide fissure that separated 'higher levels of the *castes*' from the 'privileged' groups. According to his argumentation, the main scenery of such 'run' was the market located in the *plazas mayores* and main streets of cities such as Bogotá (*Santafé*), Lima, Córdoba, Caracas, Quito and Mexico City. In these places "no-one knew who was who," (Romero, 2004: 139) due to the dramatic mimetic behaviour of the popular sectors which in the daily interaction acquired a 'refined language' and used it along with rented clothing and jewellery (despite getting into great debts) in order to differentiate from the lowest social sectors. However, the dominant groups also struggled to maintain their status in these meeting places where, in spite of the variety of the creole society, the social differentiation was enforced through the use of a few prevailing terms: the *gente decente* (decent people), the

*populacho* (pejorative term to refer to the masses), and finally, the *vagos* (truant) and *mendigos* (beggars).

In addition, the noble residential distribution persisted. This meant that the spaces of symbolic social integration and potential upward social mobility (i.e. the *plaza mayor*, prevailing *plazuelas* and the main street) coincided with the residential areas of dominant groups, and therefore differentiated from the nascent peripheral neighbourhoods that were inhabited by popular sectors and were rarely visited by elitist groups. Yet, according to Romero's (2004: 146) description, peripheral areas were essential in the sense that the popular sectors rescued their 'sense of social group' within these spaces (e.g. by celebrating their own parties and applying their practices) after a busy day of mimetic behaviour in the market and main streets.

### **5.1.3. Third moment: pre-modern urban centrality 'furnished' with modern accessories**

The third moment of pre-modern urban centrality is defined by two elements: first, the reconfiguration of political power after the political independence; second, the perpetuation of *La Hacienda* within the general context characterised by the emergence of industrial capitalism. This situation meant the enhancement of Bogotá's spatial structure and its historical linear-concentric pattern.

Regarding the reconfiguration of political power, the most important aspect is the formation of a dominant class led by a "new elite" (Romero, 2004; Guillén, 1979: 423) after the independence and the succeeding civil wars in the nascent republic of Colombia and the rest of the subcontinent. The outcome between the conflictive contact between urban elites and powerful rural groups resulted in a new class, "the patricians" (Romero, 2004: 173). According to Romero (2004), these groups were not only aware of their power based on the production of wealth but also of their capacity to "create from each colonial context an independent nation with a defined physiognomy" (Romero, 2004: 176).

The fusion of the urban and rural dominant groups led to the creation of a bipolar structure of power and to the birth of particular dynamics in "the imagination of the new society" (Romero, 2004: 178/205). However, such dynamics were not oriented through defined representations of space i.e. conceived spatial strategies but according



to intuitive or spontaneous actions motivated by short term political and economic interests. Drawing on Romero (2004: 174ff), this involved a lack of ‘coherence’ of the actions of the groups struggling for power. The author refers to contradictions such as the fact that the ‘world of cities’ inherited from the colonial period were instrumental in spite that powerful rural groups which were led by the anti-urban ideology of *el criollismo*<sup>70</sup>. In this sense, for these groups in conflict, the city became a space to be taken (and not to be obliterated). They considered that occupying a seat of power was an ‘unavoidable aim’ since each centre of the colonial network constituted a strong sign of “authority” (Romero, 2004: 177/187). In this regard we highlight that the semiotic layer of space played a major role. The interpretative condition of the city (regarded as a spatial sign) within the established power relations was particularly relevant regarding the unfolding of these diverse processes during this period.

This general context serves for the understanding of Colombia’s and Bogotá’s socio-spatial structure. To begin with, the mode of production was only slightly modified with the political independence from Spain “in spite that capitalist conditions were created to articulate the social relations of production” (Romero, 2004: 178; Guillén, 1979: 360). This meant, in Colombia’s case, the dissolution of every associative structure different from *La Hacienda*, concurrently, along with it the introduction of tobacco monoculture. This strategy was accomplished in different ways (e.g. the abolition of all forms of indigenous property and of slavery), but particularly via the perpetuation of the historical dissolution of alternative associative structures. During the initial phase of this period, such dissolution was achieved through the brutal defeat, murder and proscription of freely associated and independent craft workers<sup>71</sup> (Guillén, 1979: 362/387ff). In regards to land property, the expropriation of ecclesiastic goods was not too different from the *composiciones* developed by the *encomenderos* of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ridiculously low prices were paid to the nascent republican State for the benefit of the great landowners at the cost of the supposed objectives of the

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<sup>70</sup> In this regard the noble city type differs from the North American city whose origins are related to the dominance of the representation of space of the ‘common man’. This type of ideology informed the conception and creation of ‘rural-urban landscapes’ where the ‘grid’ acquired an ‘anti-urbanist’ meaning and constituted ‘a republican counter-design’ of feudal and bourgeois European values (see chapter 2.2.1.2.). On the other hand, *El criollismo* can be seen as a sort of spatial practice. Romero (2004: 177) defines it as a sort of ‘spontaneous ideology’ connected to the countryside’s everyday life that was so to say ‘fixed’ (or spatialized) through the conflict and negotiations between rural and urban dominant groups.

<sup>71</sup> By 1870 there were about 700,000 peasants, 22,537 traders, 92,347 craftsmen and 4,260 ‘manufacturers’ in the country. See Guillén (1979: 342).

expropriation process i.e. the payment of the public debt and the equal distribution of land to make it more productive<sup>72</sup>.

Guillén (1979: 340/362f/438) insists on differentiating this context from the European and North American ‘capitalist rationalities’ and therefore has coined the concept *capitalismo hacendatario* to refer to a mode of production strongly connected to neo-colonial capital. According to the author’s analysis, the *capitalismo hacendatario* does not support its success on ‘economic efficiency’ or ‘rational enrichment’. This type of capitalism is based on the exercise of pure political power through which supposed modern entrepreneurs obtain great profits even in a context of ‘finance inefficiency and unproductiveness’. Yet, the success of *capitalismo hacendatario* rested on the harmonic ideological, and material relationship, with industrialised nations. On the one hand, the Colombian patricians embraced the notion of the ‘complete dependence of the nations’ according to their immediate needs. This notion of dependence was related to industrialised nations’ interpretation of statements related to free market and the international division of labour. However, when this ideological coincidence was threatened due to some diplomatic controversy, military actions of core countries such as England and France did take place to ensure its maintenance (Romero, 2004; Guillén, 1979). On the other hand, the upkeep of commercial relationships with neo-colonial capital ensured the preservation of the tobacco monoculture (hence the prevalence of *La Hacienda*) as dominant economic activity in spite of the uneven exchange it presupposed for the whole nation.

This context indicates the upkeep, by means of violence, of old strategies and socio-cultural values of the previous colonial periods. This is, in other words, the maintenance of the communitarian associative structure of *La Hacienda* which now appears under a “fancy dress of carnival modernity” (Guillén, 1979: 363).

Thus, the prevailing ‘structures of power’ reinforced and assured the maintenance of old forms that were historically based on *La Encomienda*’s noble values. This refers to the preservation of symbolic hierarchies which were not sustained by accumulating money but by a sort of political power whose contradictions (e.g. the contingent pursue of patricians to establish federalism or centralism, or to promote free

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<sup>72</sup> This transfer of land was mainly achieved by means of commercial speculation which is described in detail by Guillén (1979: 434ff) as well as in literature works of that time such as *Olivos y aceitunos todos son unos* written by José María Vergara y Vergara.



market strategies or protectionism) are resolved in a particular way: the creation and upkeep of two ‘traditional political parties’ (i.e. liberals and conservatives) and of a “strategic system of wars and reconciliations” (Guillén, 1979: 424) between them for about a whole century i.e. until the end of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 1880s the internal process of the country entailed an accumulation of capital which was conditioned by a global conjuncture. In reference to the internal process, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were a considerable amount of idled capitals at the disposal of Colombian elite’s, in spite of their lavish consumption patterns and the limitations created by several aspects, mainly, the recurrent civil wars as well as the financial and fiscal manipulations (Guillén, 1979). However, there was no possibility to invest easily such accumulated capital in the expansion of the agricultural exploitation of tobacco for two reasons: the fall of the international tobacco’s price and the low consumption in the country due to the pauperism of the proletarianised population (Guillén, 1979: 443). Regarding the global conjuncture, industrialised countries had already accumulated strong capitals, owned industries and promoted new ones. Therefore, such countries needed abundant raw materials as well as markets for their manufactured products. This condition implied that industrialised cities were growing at tremendous rates and their population required a large amount of food items that they were not able to produce (Romero, 2004: 248). This general condition created indirect as well as a direct pressure<sup>73</sup> on Latin America which was dealt by the ruling class in particular manners.

According to Romero (2004: 175/284), at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was ‘a new patrician generation’ in the subcontinent (sons or great sons of founders of the Latin American republics) who had already consolidated their economic power, detached their interests, and fitted their objectives accordingly through the implementation of European models (particularly the Victorian and the Napoleon III models). In Colombia, the elites certainly developed increasing needs which led them to perpetuate *La Hacienda* within the new conditions of industrial capitalism. Three aspects played a key role in achieving the maintenance of the prevailing associative form. First, the ‘centralization of political power’ by means of an alliance based on class

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<sup>73</sup> Whilst indirect pressure was exercised through the actions of merchants as well as financiers’ negotiation of loans, direct pressure was implemented via military and political actions e.g. obstruction of ports, occupation of territories, promotion of internal civil wars, etc.

interests (i.e. ‘the patricians’) at the cost of political party’s loyalties<sup>74</sup> (Guillén, 1979: 423). This alliance did not mean the end of the system of wars and reconciliations via the two traditional political parties, rather its prolongation. Second, the introduction of protectionism (strong state) linked to the monoculture and export model of an efficient agricultural product: “the coffee” (Guillén, 1979: 478f). And third, the establishment of a particular relation between the state and the Catholic Church after the expropriation process. The church was granted certain independence, as well as power, over education, marriage rights (i.e. the conditioning of the economic life of the family to ecclesiastic decisions) and the institutionalization of ‘other’ religious associations. In this manner, the church (which shared *La Hacienda*’s values for its own benefit such as mimetic conformism, promotion of pyramidal kinship structures, rhetoric authoritarianism, etc.) acquired the function of guaranteeing, in a missionary form, the permanence of a ‘system of obedience’ to *La Hacienda* in a context of “protectionism of industry” (Guillén, 1979: 484ff).

The outcome during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a considerable increment of “mercantile life,” (Guillén, 1979: 480; Romero, 2004: 262) and demographic growth<sup>75</sup>. This condition alters, to some extent, the patrician character of the elites and propels a social mobility that starts to break traditional social structures in an indirect manner (Romero, 2004: 259f). The ‘new patricians’ appeared as an ambiguous group that is defined by Guillén (1979) and Romero (2004) through related concepts such as ‘pseudo-industrialized bourgeoisie’, ‘baroque bourgeoisie’, etc. In Colombia, this imprecise social group referred to merging the elites of the traditional structure of *La Hacienda* with a “merchant-ecclesiastic” (Guillén, 1979: 478) structure

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<sup>74</sup> Guillén’s (1979) description of the traditional parties in Colombia coincides with Romero’s (2004) assumption regarding the total disregard of defined ideological implications when key interests of the (Latin American) patricians were in play. Guillén (1979: 364) points out that the Colombian parties were by no means exclusively urban or rural parties, merchants’ or land owners’ parties, bourgeois or proletarian parties. According to him, these parties were outstandingly “poly-classist”: their fights and struggles were inter-urban and intra-rural; they presented identical interests and styles to deal with the critical problems of the country; however, they lacked ideological frontiers regarding major economic issues (conservatives as well as liberals have supported free market as well as protectionism in different time periods). Moreover, they were invariably connected to particular regions within hereditary forms until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and impeded effectively any political representation linked to the ownership or no-ownership of the means of production.

<sup>75</sup> Bogotá presents a remarkable increase of inhabitants during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century even though it does not register the higher rates of other main cities of the subcontinent. In 1801 there were 21.000 inhabitants in the city. By 1870 an official census registered about 40.000 inhabitants. In 1905 a national census listed 100.000 inhabitants which meant the 2.5 % of the Colombian population. In 1918 (i.e. at the end of Bogotá’s third moment of pre-modern urban centrality) this number shifted to 143.994 inhabitants. See Martínez (1976: 147), Romero (2004: 251), and Saldarriaga (2006: 82).

that evolved in the western regions of the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Once again, this dominant structure strongly conditions upward social mobility as well as its symbolic forms. The pseudo-bourgeoisie or pseudo-patrician elite became the top reference for the rest of the social groups (i.e. groups composed by small merchants, craftsmen, new rich people and other individuals that were dedicated to tertiary activities) who wanted to be part of the traditional society “without changing it” (Romero, 2004: 260).

In this context, Bogotá’s spatial hierarchy and structure were used as crucial *material* for social reproduction and differentiation. To start with, Bogotá’s spatial hierarchy is maintained along with the type of political power that characterised the preceding phases i.e. a use of political power that does not match an “orthodox capitalist rationality” (Guillén, 1979: 360) of exchange processes. Thus, Bogotá was established as the seat of national power and remained as the main importation distribution centre in spite of its historical and geographical isolated condition from main rivers and maritime ports. Therefore, Bogotá appears as an “‘absurd centre’ from the financial point of view” (Guillén, 1979: 360) within the context of the rising capitalist system on a global scale. In this regard, Guillén (1979: 360) underlines that local transport costs were multiplied to sustain a high consumption of all kind of foreign goods which reached 40% of the total commercial exchange for the city at the end of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, Bogotá’s spatial structure with its historical ‘linear-concentric’ pattern appears as a contradictory instrument of social reproduction and spatial representation. Our primary interpretation is that whilst ‘concentricity’ became a functional resource and a means of representing the reconfiguration of political power (i.e. from colonial power to *La Hacienda*’s power), ‘linearity’ was functionally and semiotically useful to spatialise what Guillén (1979: 444) calls, “the new way of life of *La Hacienda*” (*la nueva vida hacendataria*).

Regarding the reproduction of the concentric trend, it is possible to identify a spatial densification as well as the rigorous location of spatial objects and arrangements that, on the one hand, followed the subdivisions and spacing (i.e. the grid with its north-south and east-west axes) inherited from the colonial periods; and on the other hand, expressed certain level of specialisation (e.g. the construction of different types of

roofed markets<sup>76</sup>), and the pseudo-bourgeois character of Bogotá's dominant social groups e.g. the city theatre (*teatro municipal*) which are located on the north-south axis, and the *Teatro Colón* located on the east-west axis. Further examples are the banking sector (a key instrument of *La Hacienda* for finance and speculation) and the building of the regional state government (i.e. *El Pasaje Rufino Cuervo*<sup>77</sup>) that were located along the north-south axis and in between the *Plaza de Bolívar*<sup>78</sup> (former *plaza mayor*) and the *Plaza de Santander* (former *Plazuela de San Francisco* - earlier *plazuela de la yerba* or place of the *humilladero*).

Fig. 35. *Pasaje Rufino Cuervo* (beginnings of 20<sup>th</sup> century) and *Plazuela de San Francisco* (end of 19<sup>th</sup> century)



Source: Eduardo López and *Colección Museo Nacional de Colombia*. Note the presence of the *humilladero* that was demolished some years after

Yet, it is worth noting that the east-west axis gained functional and semiotic importance and therefore the historical north-south hierarchy appeared somewhat counteracted during this period. The construction of several spatial elements on the western border of the city confirms this situation. Principally, the main train station (built in 1886 and replaced for a new one in 1917 – *La Estación de la Sabana*), and a new plaza (*Plaza de los Mártires*) dominated by a church (*del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús* or *Voto Nacional*) that was built ‘to end’ and ‘commemorate’ a civil war (*La*

<sup>76</sup> The *Mercado de las Nieves* (initiated in 1906), *Mercado de Carnes* (initiated in 1893) and the *Matadero Público* (initiated in 1894).

<sup>77</sup> However, this building entailed also commercial, cultural and further governmental activities. See a more detailed description in Niño (1991: 58).

<sup>78</sup> The *plaza mayor* was named differently after the political emancipation. In 1846, the central plaza was renamed as the *Plaza de Bolívar* and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century its name changed to *La Plaza de la Constitución*. Nowadays this significant space is once again known as *La Plaza de Bolívar*.

*Guerra de los Mil Días*) as well as to consecrate the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Fig. 36. National shield carved on the facade of the *Voto Nacional* church (2009)

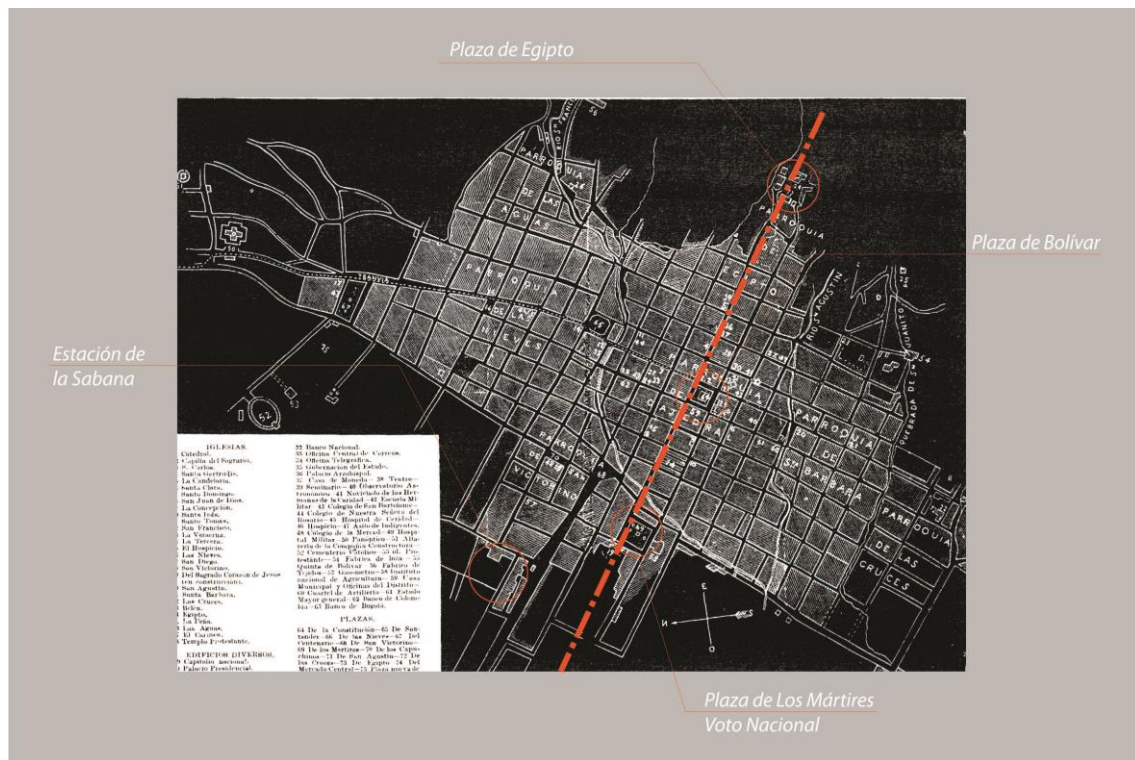


Source: Own elaboration

Whilst the new *plaza* was equidistantly located in relation to the *Plaza de Egipto* (located on the eastern border in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) and aligned with the topographical centre of the *Plaza de Bolívar*; the train station was connected to the city's more central area (more specifically to the *Plazuela de San Victorino*) through the traditional access road from the west (*el camino hacia occidente*) which historically connected Bogotá to the distant fluvial and maritime ports.

However, the most important fact to be identified is that *La Hacienda*, rooted in interrelated institutions of the colony (e.g. the Catholic Church, the figure of the *encomienda*, etc.), chooses the *plaza mayor* i.e. the prime historical spatial sign of 'authoritarian power' as its prime representational space. Two events marked the establishment of this square as the prime spatial sign of *La Hacienda* in 1846: first, the political act that approved the construction of the National Capitol to host all public powers of the nation; and second, the construction of the *Galerías de Arrubla* or *Arrubla* galleries.

Fig. 37. Hierarchization of the east-west axis. End of 19<sup>th</sup> century



Source: Own elaboration. Based on *Almanaque y Guía Ilustrada de Bogotá*

On the one hand, the Capitol, which stands until today, was projected to occupy the south side of the *plaza mayor* (renamed as *Plaza de Bolívar* in 1846) and meant to signify ‘democracy’ and the idea of ‘everyone’s civil house’ via Greek monumental features. In particular, the Capitol’s clear horizontality was meant to not disrupt the verticality of the cathedral which was completed during the last years of the colonial period i.e. beginnings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to prevailing symbolic interpretations, the Capitol ‘could not and should not’ compete in terms of height with the cathedral since ‘the idea of God’ has ‘to look to us from above and has to make us elevate our gaze in order to contemplate it’. This relationship entailed that the new ‘civil temple’ holds ‘the interests of the world’ that are well expressed through ‘long parallel lines’ and ‘the not too elevated level of democratic equality’<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> These notions about the presentative, representative and interpretative characteristics of the Capitol (regarded as spatial sign) are taken from a section of a public discourse given by the Capitol’s designer, architect Tomás Reed, for the Colombian congress in 1847. Hereby we present a significant section of the discourse in Spanish language: *El Palacio del total Gobierno de una República es, en lo civil, la casa de todos; esta debe ser la expresión de mi obra. Nada pues de aislada cárcel, ni de hosca fortificación, ni de alegre teatro; nada tampoco de iglesia, toda vez que no tratamos de fábrica religiosa. Quede abierto ese atrio o ese patio, como una inmensa puerta por donde entre, con derecho de amo en su casa, toda la República (...) La Catedral ocupa situación dominante en la plaza y absolutamente no podría El*

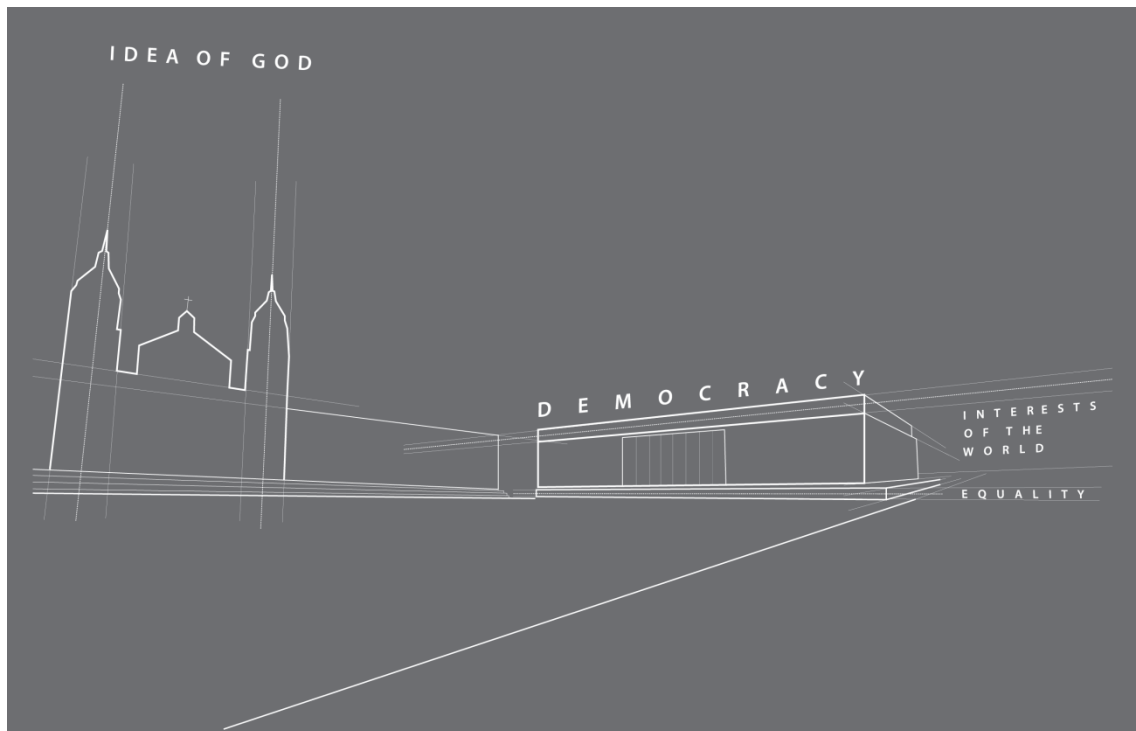


Fig. 38. *Cathedral and Plaza de Bolívar* (1852)



Source: El Espectador. Galeria-468473

Fig. 39. Spatial meanings of the Capitol in relation to the *Plaza*



Source: Own elaboration

*Capitolio competir con ella en elevación, ni debería hacerlo. Debido a que la idea de Dios nos mire de más alto, y que eleve nuestras miradas al contemplarla. El templo civil mantiene intereses del mundo, y allí están bien las largas paralelas a la tierra, y el nivel, no muy elevado, de la igualdad democrática.* Quoted in Arango (1990: 108).

The spatial meanings expressed in fig. 39 endured as the dominant representation of space projected onto the *Plaza de Bolívar* during the Capitol's problematical 80 years of construction i.e. practically the entire third moment of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá. During such a long period, alternative designs with strong vertical accentuations and other symbolic-aesthetical variations to the original design of the Capitol were repeatedly rejected and criticised within the political and cultural arena.

Fig. 40. *Plaza de Egipto* (1944) on the vertical east-west axis



Source: *Colección Museo de Bogotá*

From our perspective this spatial organisation of conventions configured a readable spatial code, which involves an icon (the cathedral) and an index (the Capitol). Despite the strong ‘secular’ and ‘civil’ characteristics of the Capitol, this public building was deliberately constructed to not disrupt or confront the ‘divine authority’ that is iconically signified through the cathedral. This condition makes the Capitol a subordinated spatial sign. In this sense, we define the Capitol as an ‘index’ of the unquestionable character of ‘divinity’ in the context of the establishment and maintenance of Colombia’s socio-political order. This subordinated condition is reinforced by the fact that the creation of the main public space of the new nation (i.e. the creation of the *Plaza de Bolívar* mainly through the Capitol) did not include the transgression of ‘the ground’ of the main sign of colonial authority i.e. the quadrangular shape and scale of the former *Plaza de Armas* where the Capitol was located. Moreover, the sacral character of the former *Plaza de Armas* was reinforced through additional



spatial/urban features, particularly, the semiotic opposition of the foundational axes. Whilst the north-south axis was characterised by the horizontality of the main signifiers and the traditional urban tissue; the east-west axis organised spatially the main vertical accentuations of the whole spatial arrangement i.e. the sacred peaks of *Monserate* and *Guadalupe*, the topographically elevated church of the *Plaza de Egipto*, the cathedral's belfries and the slender dome of the church of *El Voto Nacional*.

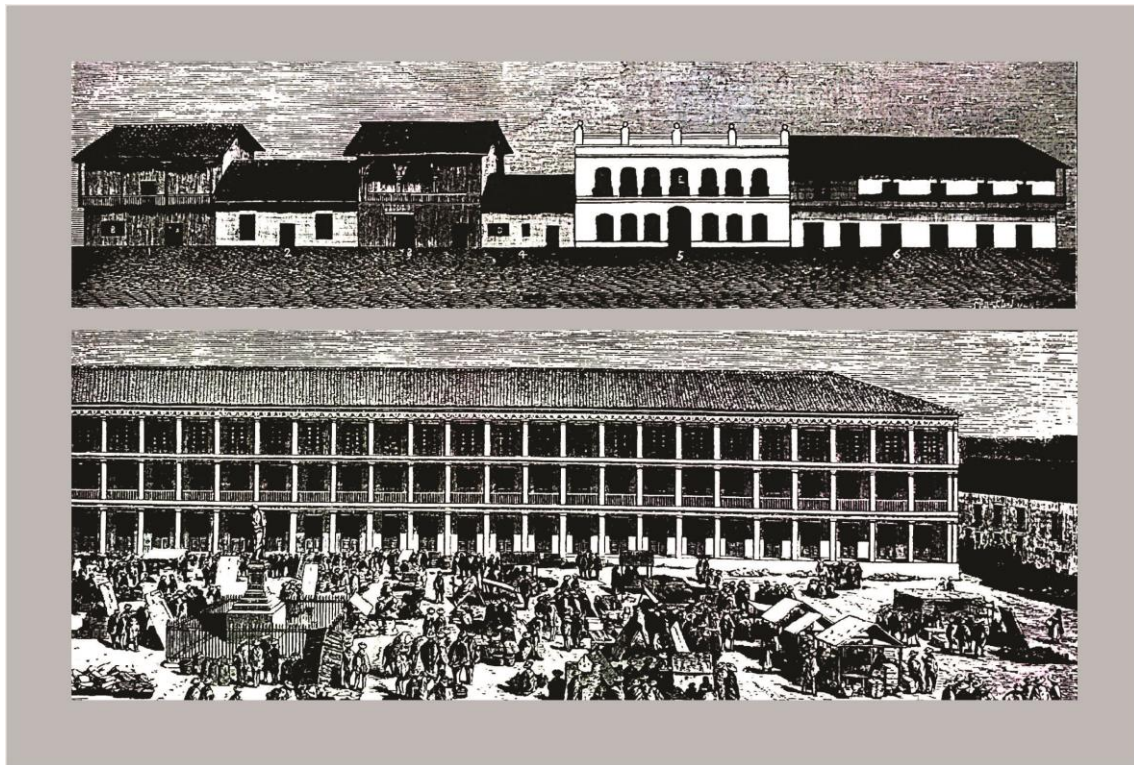
On the other hand, the *Galerías de Arrubla* (destroyed by a fire in 1900) was a prominent horizontal three storey structure that replaced several buildings of the colonial period (e.g. the viceregal court, the former *Cabildo* or town hall, the mayor's office and the prison) that were located on the west side of the *plaza mayor* i.e. in front of the cathedral and besides the Capitol. This building has been normally defined as the seat of Bogotá's renewed municipal administration. However, we assert that this building was indeed the main spatial sign of *La Hacienda*'s consumption model. This is a signifier that complemented the arrangement composed by the cathedral, the Capitol and the square's void and therefore fitted within the code established through the maintenance of the *Plaza de Bolívar* as seat of political power and the related introduction of the Capitol.

The functional distribution and appropriation of the *Galerías de Arrubla* are eloquent in this regard. This building accommodated on the ground floor (facing the *plaza*) the most luxurious shops of *imported goods* and the most exclusive restaurants and cafés frequented by the elite. The wealth and exclusive life style of a powerful minority completed this scenario already characterised by the merge of sacral and secular authority which, altogether, configured 'the iconic spatial sign of *La Hacienda*'s total power'. This is a key representational space that could not be disturbed and therefore a period after the construction of the *Galerías* local traders were evicted from the *Plaza de Bolívar*. These traders were 'located' in the *plazuelas* of *San Victorino* and *San Francisco* (earlier *plazuela de la yerba* or place of the *humilladero*, and currently known as *Parque Santander*) and in a new roofed market. Interestingly, this new market was located on the east-west axis nearby the *Plaza de Bolívar*. It was erected and economically exploited by the same contractor that had built the *Arrubla* galleries<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> In this sense we prioritize a structural interpretation of meaning and power relations. Other evaluations of the *Arrubla* Galleries provide only some remarks of harmonic social/individual aspects and isolated aesthetical characteristics. For instance, Martínez (1976: 120) highlights the true architectural 'modern'

Fig. 41. Former west facade of the *Plaza de Bolívar* and *Arrubla* galleries



Source: Théron and *Papel Periódico Ilustrado* (Taken from Martínez, 1976)

This socio-spatial context tells us about the dominance and the persistent instrumental character of colonial-missionary sense-making processes and values within a period of secularization. This refers to the establishment of republican and democratic principles as well as the expansion of market economy, in the terms of *La Hacienda*.

This dominant and contradictory trend was evident at the end of this moment of urban centrality. The particular (sacral) relationship between horizontality and verticality established through the Capitol, the cathedral and the *Arrubla* galleries was re-created through different decisions regarding the construction of institutional buildings within the *Plaza de Bolívar*. First, the replacement (1902-1905) of the *Arrubla* Galleries with the new (and current) city hall (*Edificio Liévano*) that featured the same functional distribution (i.e. exclusive commerce on the first floor and city administration

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features (particularly, the buildings' clear modular configuration) and the exceptional civic qualities mixed with a positive enterprising spirit of the contractor and co-proprietor of the galleries, Juan Manuel Arrubla. On the other hand, Arango (1990: 117) underlines the 'medieval' characteristics of the building such as its clear functional distribution: commerce on the first floor and city administration on upper floors.

on upper floors) and dominant spatial convention i.e. horizontality; second, the rejection in 1913 and 1923 of alternative designs for the Capitol which introduced dominant vertical elements such as the dome proposed by Sadi González and Alberto Martínez<sup>81</sup>; and third, the construction of the subtle presidential palace (*Palacio de la Carrera*) in 1908 at the north-south axis behind the Capitol, which did not pose a threat to, nor alter the existing spatial texture<sup>82</sup>.

Fig. 42. *Edificio Liévano* in context. Left side Capitol, right side *Edificio Liévano* (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, official representations of space legitimated this spatial pattern being described. As such, similar to viceroy Guirior's administrative division of 1774, the first code of urbanism<sup>83</sup> of Bogotá appeared in 1875 as a mechanism to face different situations which were identified in those years as aspects subject to 'corrections'. To begin with, this code ratified the grid's crossed axes and in so doing re-introduced the main indexical sign of the location of (colonial) authority. According to this instrumental sign to organise space, land subdivision and existing plots were adjusted to follow the forms and dimensions inherited from the colonial period. Moreover, the urban code revalidated colonial standards such as the construction of *plazuelas* dominated by educational institutions according to city's physical and demographic growth (every 15 new blocks had to include a central *plaza* whose

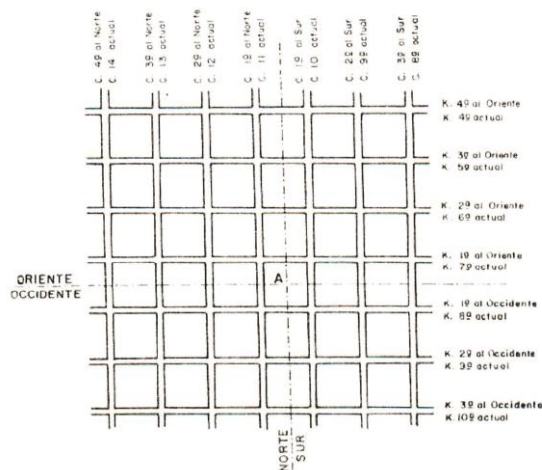
<sup>81</sup> See Arango (1990: 106/109f) and Niño (1991: 46f) for details about the graphic representation of the alternative proposals for the Capitol.

<sup>82</sup> However, the presence of a further political institution such as the presidency in proximity to the *Plaza de Bolívar* is another aspect to be identified within the general trend of the socio-spatial concentration of power.

<sup>83</sup> See Martínez's (1976: 123f) description of the leading premises of Bogotá's first urban planning code.

bordering should contained two plots for schools). It is interesting to note that such fidelity to colonial representations of space was maintained within the conflictive political scenario characterised by the dominance of federalism i.e. decentralization (1860s-1880s) and the impacts of the emergent pseudo-industrialization promoted from the 1880s onwards. Similar official measures preceded and followed the city's urban code of 1875 until the 1910s. For instance, the decree of 1861 that set the political borders of the city so that the *Plaza de Bolívar* remained to be the very centre of the whole spatial arrangement<sup>84</sup> and as the vertex from which the new urban nomenclature was organised. Additional examples are from the official decrees of 1902, 1914 and 1917 which, according to the descriptions of Saldarriaga (2006: 88) and Castillo Daza (2003: 67ff), entailed no essential changes except for some slight modifications e.g. the width of streets.

Fig. 43. Official urban nomenclature at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



Source: Martínez (1976: 123)

However, the boost of the concentric pattern occurred along with a contrasting phenomenon: the extension and adjustment of Bogotá's linear tendency. This phenomenon consisted in the enhancement and progressive functional and legal incorporation of *Chapinero*, situated 5km away from Bogotá in north direction.

The small town of *Chapinero* historically functioned as itinerary referent between Bogotá and the other cities dominated by *La Hacienda*. It was part of a huge latifundium (*La Hacienda de Chapinero*) and great landowners committed themselves

<sup>84</sup> See Martínez's (1976: 122) description of the borders of the federal district of Bogotá in 1861.

to promote religious practices within this area. These powerful actors provided land along the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the condition that the authority built facilities followed specific uses or functions. That is to say, that some fields were ceded in 1812 for the construction of a square framed by a chapel that, in following decades, was appropriated by local residents as well as inhabitants of Bogotá from every social strata.

By the 1870s Chapinero appears as a true ‘noble space’ physically detached from Bogotá but well connected to the main core of national power. The spatial link was composed of the *Camino Viejo* (later on known as *Carretera Central del Norte*) and the *Camino Nuevo* (identified at that time as *La Alameda Vieja*) which converged in the northern border of Bogotá where the main streets that followed the north-south axis trajectory ended i.e. the area of San Diego. *Chapinero* was characterised by noble typical elements: the *Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* church built by ecclesiastic as well as civil influent actors from Bogotá who enhanced the existing temple (i.e. the small chapel of *Chapinero*), *Chapinero*’s layout which partly followed the colonial grid’s form and dimensions, a hotel, two schools and numerous residences featuring the architecture of the colonial period which belonged to the original inhabitants of the area.

Fig. 44. Construction of *Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* church



Source: *El Espectador*. Galeria-468473

This typical arrangement included a few luxurious *quintas*. This term refers to a sort of palaces surrounded by vast gardens which came out from the partitioning of

great *haciendas* e.g. the *haciendas* of *Chapinero*, *Camargo* and *Rosales* which formerly belonged to the Dominican order. These residences presented diverse European architectonic styles as well as typical bourgeois spatial distributions which contrasted to the noble colonial residences<sup>85</sup> that still characterised Bogotá's urban tissue in those years. However, these sumptuous buildings were not permanently used (Martinez, 1976; Arango, 1990; Castillo Daza, 2003) by its owners (i.e. the new patricians or pseudo-bourgeois elites who still resided in Bogotá) and did not represent a structural change if we consider the general socio-spatial characteristics of this phase of urban centrality.

By the end of this period (i.e. approx. until the 1910s) there was a sort of modernization of the noble character of Bogotá and *Chapinero*. There was an increase of commercial activities and both urban cores were 'furnished' with 'modern accessories' such as the first telephone lines, trams and national trains. We use the notion of furnishing because this phenomenon did not alter the traditional urban centrality in *Chapinero* which was strongly informed by the preferences of traditional elite groups. Whilst the main church, two schools, a convent and a chapel were built in close proximity to the main square (i.e. a typical feature of the colonial spatial structure), spatial elements related to exchange, manufacture or modern communication facilities (e.g. a minor public market, the administration building of the tram company, the post-telegraph office, and a shoe factory) had a clear peripheral location<sup>86</sup>. Additionally, this traditional urban centrality arrangement was linked to Bogotá's north-south axis which organized the main spatial referents of *La Hacienda's* national/regional political and financial power.

This spatial configuration entailed contrasting realities. The southern border of the city, linked through the north-south axis to Bogotá's most central area and to *Chapinero*, was already characterised by the concentration of the historically and

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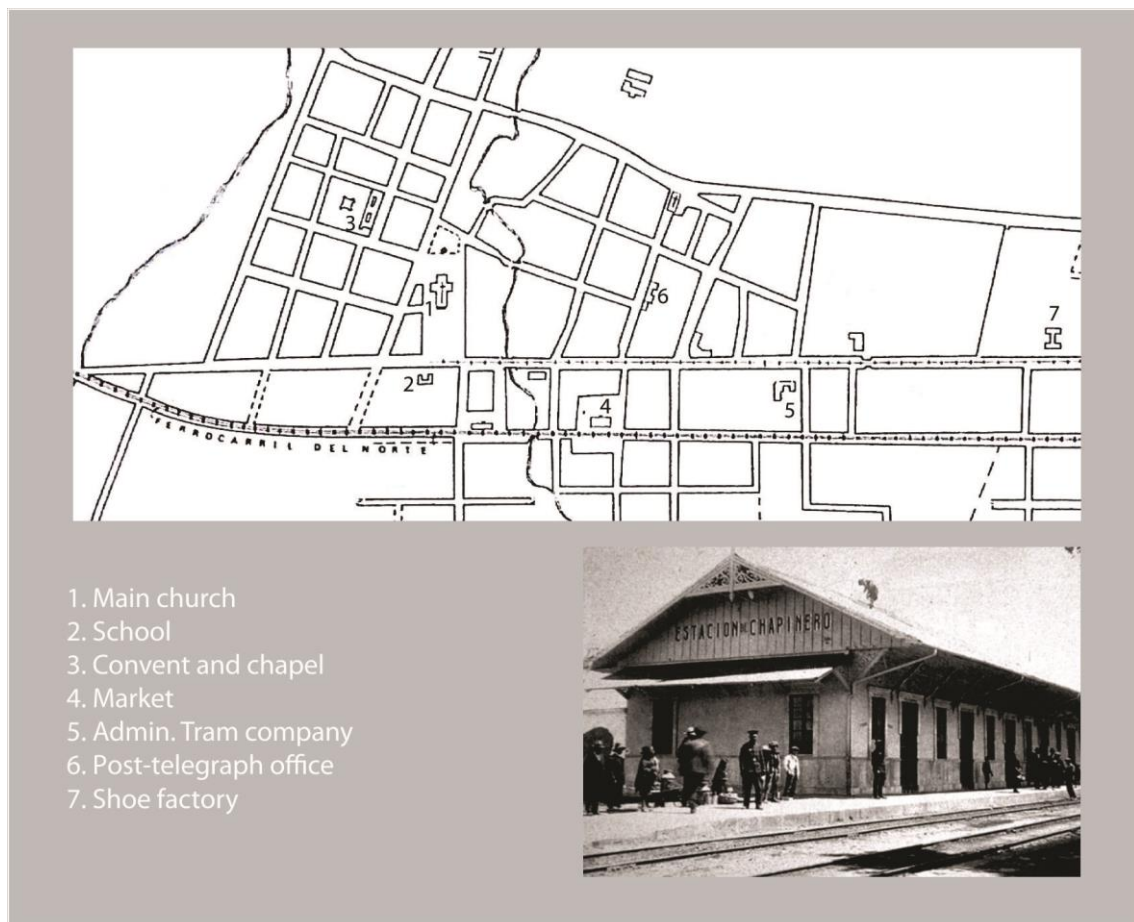
<sup>85</sup> See the architectonic description of these buildings in Arango (1990: 147f).

<sup>86</sup> The exception to this rule was the presence of a couple of branches of commercial houses and the train station which was built in close connection to the square and the main church for accessibility (functional) purposes. Complementary services and commercial activities mostly developed in small scale and volume and took place in traditional *tiendas*. Alternatively, the number of *quintas* augmented, but these residences were still used for occasional leisure activities, or rather, for the owners' symbolic need of 'idleness'. The architectonic design of the palaces of the *quintas* expressed a clear hierarchy of spaces destined to accommodate intimate free time activities for the family. Thus, the spaces for social activities related to a bourgeois life-style which was secondary, and rarely used in these residences. See further details about the residential architecture of this period in Arango (1990: 145ff).



violently downgraded population i.e. the craftsmen and the evolving working class<sup>87</sup>. This early segregation was ‘complemented’ by green spaces and facilities located in between Bogotá and *Chapinero* which served for the social reproduction of the pseudo-bourgeois elite, such as the Polo Club, the *Hipódromo de La Magdalena*, and a private clinic (*Casa de Salud de Marly*) that were bordered by small neighbourhoods (*Barrio Sucre* and *Barrio Quesada*). These were configured according to traditional quadrangular layouts and inhabited by popular sectors.

Fig. 45. Chapinero’s train station and functional hierarchies



Source: Own elaboration. Based on *panoramio* and Martínez (1976: 153)

From our perspective, this spatial structure communicates the prevalence of spatial nobility but also appears as a highly functional *material* to resolve the contradictions between the effects of the changing mode of production and the persistent old values of dominant groups. The term ‘contradictions’ refers to the

<sup>87</sup> The southern area mainly refers to the neighbourhood of *Las Cruces*. In addition, according to Castillo Daza’s (2003: 59f) description of the ‘southern periphery’ of Bogotá, the southern border was already the prime location for the first nursing homes for the homeless, elderly and the so-called ‘demented’.

emergence of a mercantile life in Bogotá (related to the pseudo-industrialization of the nation) and the simultaneous establishment of ‘the new way of life of *La Hacienda*’ which was based on historical structures that allowed the permeation of former patricians’ values (e.g. the expression of social hierarchy and wealth through the measurement of idleness and tenure of extensive land properties). Consequently, the enhancement, the increased hierarchy, and the official recognition of *Chapinero* as the fifth neighbourhood of Bogotá in 1898 should not be understood as an organic or sub-urban expansion of the city nor as a modern functional specialisation of the territory. Conversely, this phenomenon has to be regarded as a process in which the noble character of Bogotá decreases but reappears in a nearby area in order to meet an essential need developed by dominant social groups in that context: the achievement of a clear differentiation that was required to confirm the persistent or desired (noble) status of powerful members of the elite, in other words, the need for ‘spatial hegemony’<sup>88</sup>. This need is related to a resistance to ‘change’ which was the emergent mercantile life in the city<sup>89</sup>.

From this point of view the linear tendency of Bogotá’s spatial structure was the product of spatial practices and representations of space inherent to earlier pre-modern periods. In this sense we call attention to the fact that before the implementation of modern technologies of communication at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. the trains and the electric trams that were built in 1892 and 1910 respectively) the area of *Chapinero* was intensely appropriated which prefigured the linear tendency of Bogotá’s spatial structure towards north. We refer to the presence of social groups from Bogotá and *Chapinero* and the promotion of old patrician values such as the upgrading of strong

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<sup>88</sup> True patrician or even old noble practices (i.e. those that characterised the way of life of the *encomenderos*) still defined social relations. This had a particular expression within the central region of the country at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Memoirs of those years depict this situation in detail. One of them is a narration of Pierre D’Espagnat who describes an encounter between a *hacendado* and his servants in a *hacienda* located closed to Bogotá: “*Acabo de presenciar la recepción que los peones hacen al dueño; ví satisfechos, con las manos torpes en el reborde del ala del sombrero, ofrecer al amo, ausente desde hacía año y medio, su modesto regalo, humildemente obsequiado, una gallina, unos huevos bien envueltos, todo acompañado de emocionadas bendiciones para ‘Mi Amo’. Ví, ¿me creerán? A las viejas, a las abuelas, juntar, arrodillándose sus pobres manos agrietadas, extendidas hacia él, que es el intermediario entre el cielo y los desheredados de este mundo; y ví también al hacendado volver la vista ante el temor de ceder a una imperceptible emoción, como para recomendar al cielo a toda esta pobre gente, tan amorosa, tan sumisa, tan filial, (hasta a los viejos se les dice Mi Hijo, Mi Hijita)*”. Text quoted by Guillén (1979: 150).

<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, this aspect evolves as a predominant attitude despite the fact that dominant groups profited from the new urban conditions. Drawing on Romero (2004: 261ff), representations of space expressed in the extensive naturalist literature of the time such as the countryside as ‘the ideal social environment’ which reinforced the tendency to create new residential environments with strong symbolic values.



religious practices and symbols as well as the idealisation or romantic view of the countryside which involved the social significance of idleness and nobility<sup>90</sup>.

Moreover, the implementation and design of transport technologies neither entailed socio-spatial efficiency (from a modern/capitalist point of view) nor the planning of future land uses and expansion. This fact is striking considering that during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bogotá was doubling its population. Conversely, the introduction of trains and trams benefited a reduced social group. This phenomenon involved the enhancement of the regional and national hierarchy of Bogotá which reinforced socio-spatial processes typical of the regime of *La Hacienda*.

Drawing on Guillén (1979), the implementation of mechanical transport reflected the logic of the *capitalismo hacendatario*<sup>91</sup>. The initial tram lines, which ran through animal traction, were built by a foreign firm via the figure of long concessions (approx. 30 years) that were extended according to the free will of members of the local elite and associated public officers who provided total independence as well as all kind of privileges to the foreign capital. Such model allowed the grotesque enrichment of elite groups, the foreign company and of their intermediaries. This involved a great waste of resources. This led to social protests in 1910 and to a costly tram service municipalisation because the local administration decided to request large loans from local public and private banks in order to indemnify the foreign company<sup>92</sup>.

On the other hand, the design of the tram network supported first and primarily the linear extension towards north i.e. towards *Chapinero* and its *quintas*. This evidently prioritized the everyday life of powerful minorities and refused the possibility to interconnect the densest quarters of Bogotá and develop a concentric rational growth. In this sense, the priority of the urban transport network was the connection of the prime space of authoritarian political power (i.e. north-south axis and its powerful *Plaza de Bolívar*) to the distant noble area of *Chapinero* which by the 1910s was turning into the

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<sup>90</sup> In reference to these points see Romero (2004: 261 ff), Martínez (1976: 151) and Zambrano (2007: 28).

<sup>91</sup> See definition of this concept above.

<sup>92</sup> This situation of enrichment by means of 'political power' (and not by 'economic efficiency') is common and widely described by Guillén (1979) who observes that the development of communications in the country was particularly characterised by these sort of practices. A key aspect regarding this situation is that from the 1880s onwards there is a strong manipulation and semi-monopolization of finance capital via public and private banks that were highly associated to political power. See Guillén (1979: 445ff) and Castillo Daza (2003: 53).

elite's permanent residential area<sup>93</sup>. This tendency was maintained until the end of this period of urban centrality because, according to Castillo Daza (2003: 53), until 1918 the priority of the city administration was to implement a predominant linear network: from *Chapinero* to the southern neighbourhood of *Las Cruces* in addition to the short track in east-west direction that linked the main train station to the city's more central area.

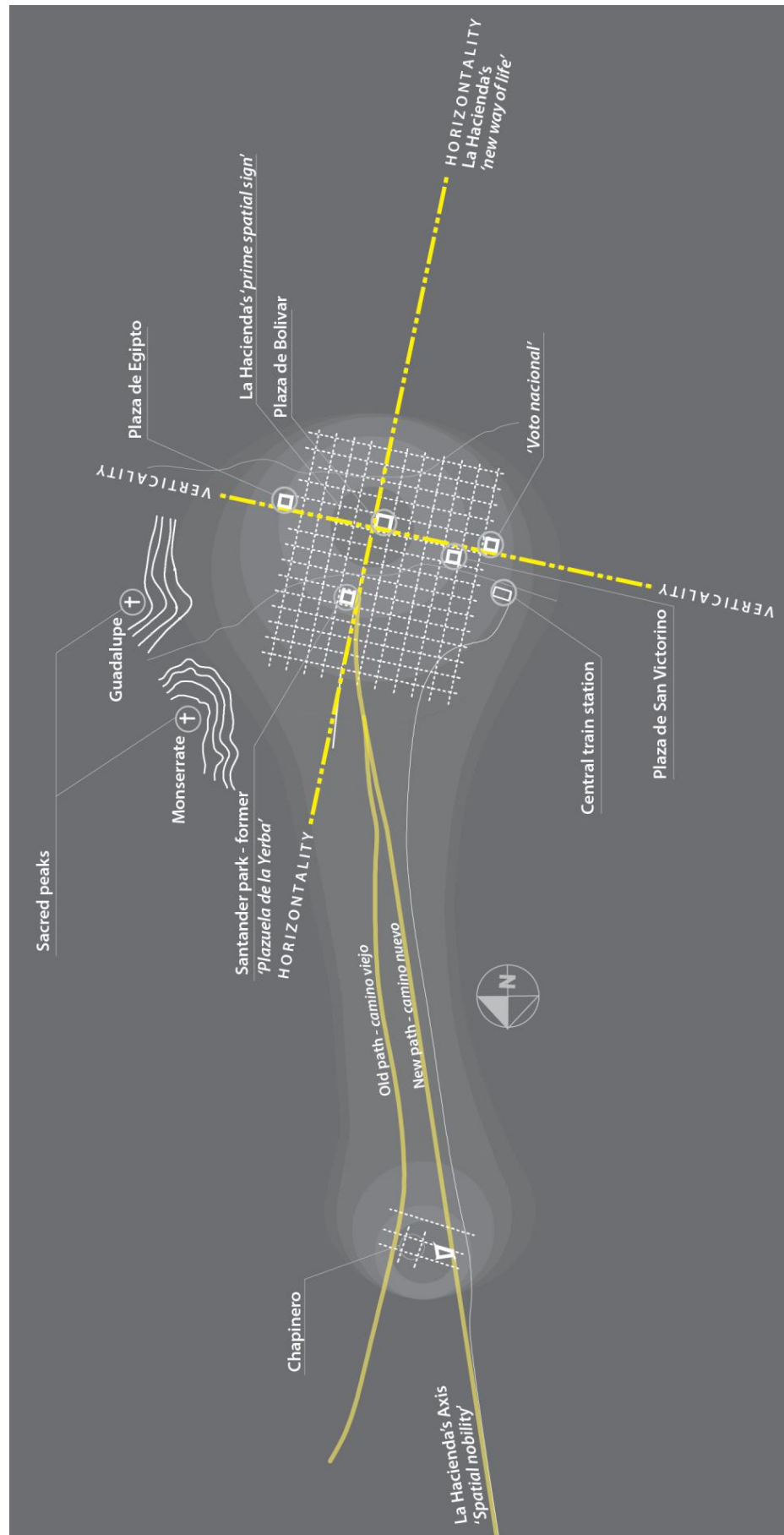
Last but not least, the national train network also enhanced the city's spatial linearity through 'the north line' which was built parallel to the *Camino Nuevo* and the first tram line. It connected Bogotá's main train station to *Chapinero* and to the northern regions i.e. those areas were characterised by *La Hacienda's* way of life. The planning of this infrastructure resembles the strategies of the colonial period which promoted the inner or regional connections of Bogotá instead of the communications to maritime or fluvial ports which in this phase had not particularly been improved.

The following diagram summarizes the main characteristics of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá around 1910.

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<sup>93</sup> The first tram line connected *Chapinero* to the *Plaza de Santander* (former place of the *humilladero*). Thereafter, the planning of further lines prioritized the connection between the *Plaza de Bolívar* with the main train station. This occurred at the cost of the improvement of accessibility conditions of other key areas such as the strategic political, commercial and cultural node that was located near the *Plaza de Santander*. This area was easily reachable from the main train station through the straight and dense street of *La calle 15*. In regard to the planning and execution of tram lines see Martínez (1976: 151f) and Castillo Daza (2003: 53f).

Fig. 46. Pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá. Diagram.



Source: Own elaboration

## **5.2. Crisis of Pre-Modern Urban Centrality in Bogotá**

In the following, we will outline ‘the crisis of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá’. This is a ‘moment of urban centrality’ that developed from the 1910s to the 1970s. The general context of this period was defined by *La Hacienda*’s introduction of new socio-spatial strategies to maintain ‘communitarian’ values, and at the same time, ‘modernise’ some social groups and areas of everyday life. There are two sub-periods of this crisis. The first sub-period is a ‘transit’ phase strongly characterised by practices of ‘controlled socialization and the partial concession of spatial rights’. The promotion and rejection of this kind of practices led to the second sub-period which is called in this research ‘the spatial unfolding of the crisis’. This ‘spatial unfolding’ took place from the 1940s to the 1970s. During these three decades, the essential elements and principles that define Bogotá’s current urban centrality configuration (around 2010) were established. At the end of chapter five we analyse in semiotic terms the urban centrality that structured Bogotá at the end of the 1970s, and provide guidelines to approach the city’s spatial structure at the end of the 2000s.

### **5.2.1. The general context: *La Hacienda*’s instrumentalization of the ISI**

The crisis of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá unfolded within a conjunction that, drawing on Romero (2004: 319ff), ‘unified’ the whole subcontinent. Romero specifically refers to the global financial and monetary crisis of 1929 which prescribed the adjustment of economic relations between the different Latin American countries with the industrialised nations and the rest of the world. Such adjustment implied the confrontation to an overall scarcity and the manoeuvres of the countries that sold manufactured products and bought raw materials such as the withdrawal of sales and the fall of prices.

In such a context of general scarcity, the internal social relations in Latin American countries were adjusted by dominant actors in order to ‘maintain’ prevailing social structures within a general context of deep changes. For instance, Romero (2004) observes that different kinds of measures were applied by the state in each country, considering the conditions of the emerging industrial development that was taking place via the introduction of foreign capitals or through ISI (i.e. the replacement of import of manufactured goods by implementing national industries). For example, measures such as the promotion of strong nationalist discourses and movements, the use of alternative

monetary and financial mechanisms together with the repression of popular sectors (Romero, 2004: 320/381). This approach to the global crisis suggests the inseparable character of internal social processes in each Latin American country and external forces driven by ‘core countries’ in those turbulent years.

However, drawing on Guillén (1979), Colombia’s internal processes appear as a dominant force that shaped social and spatial arrangements. These internal processes are related to a general social, political and cultural struggle that consisted in the ‘enforced maintenance’ of key values of the dominant associative structure of *La Hacienda*. The ISI in this context emerged as a powerful socio-political “strategy” (Guillén, 1979) aimed at reinforcing an existing tendency of ‘deliberate politics of protectionism and privilege’ that benefitted a small social sector that was merged with the country’s political elite. As such, the ISI’s implementation pointed towards the transformation of the traditional elite into ‘industrial entrepreneurs’ and the maintenance of the social relations that sustained *La Hacienda*’s oligarchical power<sup>94</sup>. This strategy therefore refers to a sort of modernisation in which a reduced group ‘guides’ the whole nation towards its integration into the ‘civilised modern world’, yet keeping key characteristics of pre-modern social relations rooted in *La Encomienda* and inherent to *La Hacienda*, mainly, ‘authoritarianism’ characterised by “poly-classist vertical loyalties” (Guillén, 1979).

The institutional framework established from the 1880s to the 1910s characterised by a strong protectionism of agroindustry and a political centralization in Bogotá ensured the subsequent shift to the ISI. These 30 years appear as a pseudo-industrial period which did not entail true processes of social specialisation but the reproduction of traditional social relations<sup>95</sup>. Then, from the 1910s to the 1920s the

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<sup>94</sup> In this case, ‘oligarchy’ is not understood as an oppressing class that can be eliminated (whether through ‘guillotine or guerrillas’) but as a general social tendency and a tension. In other words, ‘oligarchy’ is defined as a “systematic form of the social relations of the whole community” (Guillén, 1979: 519f).

<sup>95</sup> A key aspect of the function of the protectionist scheme before the 1910s is the taxation model. It consisted in applying, on the one hand, very low taxes to the import of raw materials and semi-manufactured products; and on the other hand, high taxes to the import of finished goods. This scheme ensured scandalous profits for foreign manufactures and the local small elite of pseudo-industrial entrepreneurs. Whilst the first group avoided customs due to finished goods and sold the semi-manufactured or non-assembled products for very convenient prices; the second performed only a final ‘industrial’ operation, avoided the taxation of finished goods, and paid very low wages. In this sense, there was no real differentiation in regard to the previous periods that were characterised by strong consumption models of foreign goods. Therefore, the protectionist model previous to the 1910s did not

whole nation was forced to provide the necessary privileges and incentives to *La Hacienda*'s elite to make them 'industrial pioneers'. In order to accomplish this objective, the traditional 'strategy of war and reconciliation' developed by the old patrician elites was reinvented and guaranteed an apparent 'peaceful lapse' characterised by a strong nationalist discourse and the temporal alliance of the two political parties in relation to the industrialist economic model (Guillén, 1979).

Finally, from the 1930s to the 1970s the existing tendency of industrialisation based on deliberate politics of protection and privilege was reinforced via ISI. The ISI, as a particular model of industrialisation, entailed a monopolist "industrial and non-industrial mode of production" (Guillén, 1979). This notion is related to a contradictory model which is also categorised as "a-fordist" (Misas, 2002) because it succeeds in creating an accumulation of capital and at the same time prevents the development of mass consumption. This accumulation of capital is obtained via lucrative exports market and a captive internal market<sup>96</sup>, and involves a constant but mediocre growth. In this context, concentration of power and wealth is connected to a very low demand and a large mass of population excluded from the outcomes of accumulation.

Consequently, the ISI implies huge costs that are covered by the whole nation which is increasingly composed by pauperised and proletarianised population whose capacity of consumption cannot be augmented to sustain and/or increase the industrialisation process<sup>97</sup>. Therefore, this uneven condition lends itself to a strong dependency on the importation of equipment, machinery and semi-manufactured materials or, in other words, a dependency on the international industry and its financial instruments<sup>98</sup>.

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entail a real social specialisation, yet, it provided to the social structure a "fancy dress of -carnival-modernity" (Guillén 1979: 363/466).

<sup>96</sup> Such market was composed by a small high income elite, the urban middle class, and a relatively small proletariat who works for the monopolist sector.

<sup>97</sup> At the beginning of the 1950s, the secondary sector presented a very slow growth and entailed the 15.8% of the economically active population of the country. This number contrasted to the 55.5% of the primary sector as well as to the 28.7% of the 'hypertrophied tertiary sector' shaped by the massive rural exodus towards cities. In 1964, the possessors of the industry received around 32% of utilities in relation to the invested capital, 695 shareholders owned the 52.7% of the shares of 775 joint stock companies i.e. almost all legal associations that were dedicated to this sector. By 1966, 30% of the total national income reached only the 5% of the population (Guillén, 1979: 475/534).

<sup>98</sup> Particularly, the U.S.A appears as one of the main investors and financiers of the 'industrialisation process' and of its 'developing models' along with State-run and private/multinational financial institutions.

The general effects of the ISI's implementation and development became quite evident at the beginning of the 1970s. At this point, Guillén (1979) observes that the industrial entrepreneurs (those that originated from *La Hacienda's* politics at the beginning of the century) showed themselves as 'unable' to adjust the balance of payments which were deeply affected by the huge import of supplies and machinery. Consequently, the entrepreneurs did not respond to expand internal markets, or to finance the national currency with export incomes. According to Guillén (1979), this situation appears evident since the utilities obtained through the 'privileging and protectionist political power' were more attractive than any profits that could originate from any policy directed towards the upgrading of the popular sectors' income in the long term. The allied political elite ended up offering immediate alternative strategies to equilibrate the balance of payments, for instance, the manipulation and monopolising of savings and credit, or the implementation of official regulations that ensured that particular economic sectors (mainly the coffee sector) ended up paying the economic disequilibrium.

As a result, there was a general dominium of the financial-industrial sector by the 1970s. Drawing on Guillén (1979), this condition corresponds to the successful implementation of the ISI model together with its uneven social relations. However, such success of the ISI came along with the deterioration of a conflicting process of "controlled socialization" (Guillén, 1979: 520) run by the elites who could not prevent the opening of a "critical fissure" (Guillén, 1979: 517) in the prevailing social structure of *La Hacienda*.

This historical break entails a specific spatial dimension that appears particularly significant when approached from 'the crisis of pre-modern urban centrality' in Bogotá. The following chapters are aimed to reconstruct, expose and analyse such crisis as a process which becomes essential to understand Bogotá's development and current spatial structure.

### **5.2.2. The transit to crisis**

*'Controlled socialization' and the maintenance of pre-modern urban centrality features*

Considering Guillén's (1979) approach, the process of 'controlled socialization' consisted in capturing the emerging divergent associative forces and structures in order

to avoid any sort of class struggle and sustain the main social relations and practices that historically characterised *La Hacienda*.

This process was initiated in the 1920s with a wave of social organisation that came from different social spaces less exposed to the urban world dominated by *La Hacienda*'s values. Such spaces were connected to the sectors of transportation and commerce (i.e. railways, fluvial and maritime ports) in which new and less obedient groups were able to successfully organise and use violent methods under socialist leadership against their bosses. According to Urrutia (1969: 91f) and Guillén (1979: 504f), such 'disconnection' from *La Hacienda*'s socio-cultural and spatial dominion allowed the emerging urban working class<sup>99</sup> to follow the cause of a socialist party that was able to obtain a considerable amount of votes in major cities in 1921. Guillén (1979) defines this organisational wave as a true menace for those in power and compares it to the uprising of the craftsmen in the 1850s who were finally repressed and murdered. In addition, the increasing rural and urban exodus towards main cities meant a greater threat to the dominant structure characterised by paternalism, poly-classist vertical loyalties and its modes of upward social mobility.

However, during the 1920s 'controlled socialization' did not involve any strategy related to the re-structuring of urban space. In Bogotá, this situation implied a strong conflict between emerging representations of space and traditional spatial practices. To start with, there was a strong resistance to initiatives for urban expansion which originated from social spaces external to *La Hacienda*'s traditional socio-cultural domain<sup>100</sup>. This situation principally refers to the neglect of the master plan known as *Bogotá Futuro* (1919-1925) that presupposed the re-coding of urban space and the physical extension of the city, hence the inclusion of new population.

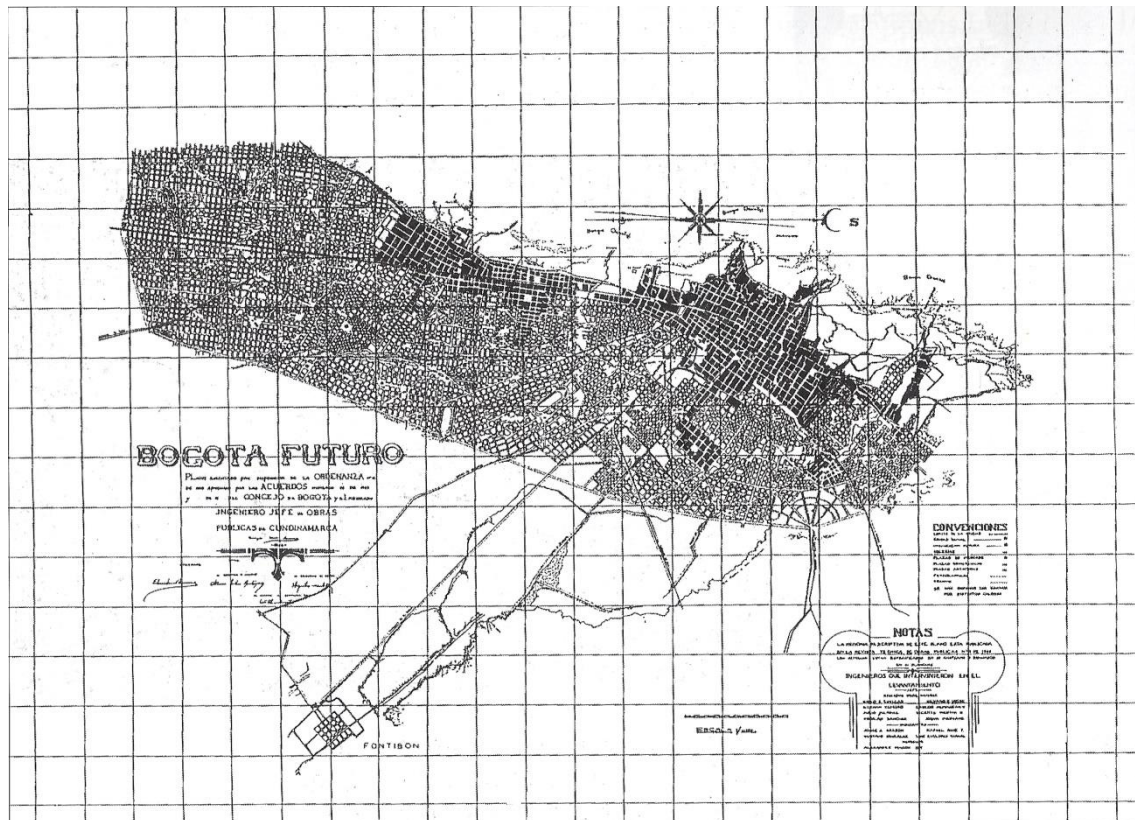
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<sup>99</sup> Such class was composed by emerging proletarians of the traditional construction industry and the embryonic manufacturing and service sector.

<sup>100</sup> It is worth pointing out that this remarkable example of the first 'modern urban plans' for Bogotá was put into political discussion by actors that came from the western Colombian region of *Antioquia*. These actors benefitted from the socio-economic model imposed by *La Hacienda* and were characterised by strong catholic beliefs. However, they were much more open to the modernisation of some aspects of social life. In this regard see Castillo Daza's (2003: 75ff) analysis of the influence of the merchant and civic leader Ricardo Olano on Colombia's city-planning during the 1920s.



Fig. 47. *Bogotá Futuro* (1923)



Source: *Obras Públicas de Cundinamarca*. CEAM

In this regard, we also underline the constant obstruction of plans to build public/collective facilities which required land transfers from powerful families and/or landowners to the city. A typical example of this situation is the response of the *hacendado* José Joaquín Vargas to the city council who was asking him to rent a vacant lot of his *Hacienda del Salitre* for the city's waste disposal. Vargas answered that if the administration needed to dispose waste, they could do it in the City Park because his land (1400 ha) was destined for his idle moments i.e. for daily walks and to get tanned (!)<sup>101</sup>. Concerning morphological issues, variations such as diagonal layouts were only fragmentarily applied to small areas of the city's periphery according to *Bogotá Futuro*<sup>102</sup>. Therefore, it is no surprise that Castillo Daza (2003: 79f) observed that *Bogotá Futuro* was initially considered, which was subsequently disregarded by high

<sup>101</sup> This sort of situations was usual. Many proprietors refused constantly to transfer land required to widen streets e.g. the *Carrera 14* in Chapinero. See further contents about this sort of episodes in Castillo Daza (2003).

<sup>102</sup> In this sense, Saldarriaga (2006: 96) identifies some sectors that feature diagonal layouts, namely, the *Claret* and *Inglés* neighbourhoods in the south as well as the *Gaitán* neighbourhood in the northern periphery.

political spheres and finally ‘forgotten’<sup>103</sup>. Moreover, taking into consideration the general socio-cultural and political conditions analysed in this research project, it is highly doubtful that the ineffectiveness of *Bogotá Futuro* was due to “technical weaknesses” as Cortés (2007: 165) suspects.

Conversely, we underline the fact that ‘controlled socialization’ involves the keen introduction of different socio-political strategies in such a context characterised by a massive demand of urban housing and by strong social conflicts connected to craftsmen’s and indigenous populations’ claims (e.g. tax reductions and respect for their land and ancient cultural values). One of the highest expressions of socio-political control in the 1920s was the official prohibition of opposing popular organisations through laws such as *La Ley Heroica* (approved in 1928) which stigmatised divergent groups as “Bolshevik” (Tirado Mejía, 1982: 140). These types of radical measures were preceded by different manoeuvres to capture the ‘socialist challenge’ within the traditional Liberal party, the use of religious mottos, or the sudden official creation of ‘employee associations’ e.g. *Sociedad Colombiana de Empleados* (1920) which were aimed at supporting official anti-socialist postures and to reproduce social hierarchies and relationships inherent to *La Hacienda* e.g. the creation of expectations of upward mobility but through paternalism exercised by high rank employees<sup>104</sup>. Regarding urban issues, traditional associations such as *La Sociedad de Embellecimiento de Bogotá*<sup>105</sup> stood as the only institutional domain where new intellectuals who were interested in urban matters could express themselves. According to Castillo Daza (2003: 80), this situation suggests that these figures ‘took refuge’ in this association. Yet, from our perspective, the fact that no other associations or political instances connected to urban planning appeared during those years indicates that these ‘intellectuals’ were far from seeking subterfuge in the *Sociedad de Embellecimiento*; rather, they became ‘captured’ within it following the general tendency of ‘controlled socialization’.

In this context Bogotá’s traditional linear-concentric pattern was boosted. With regard to concentricity, we identify the influence of state driven urban design

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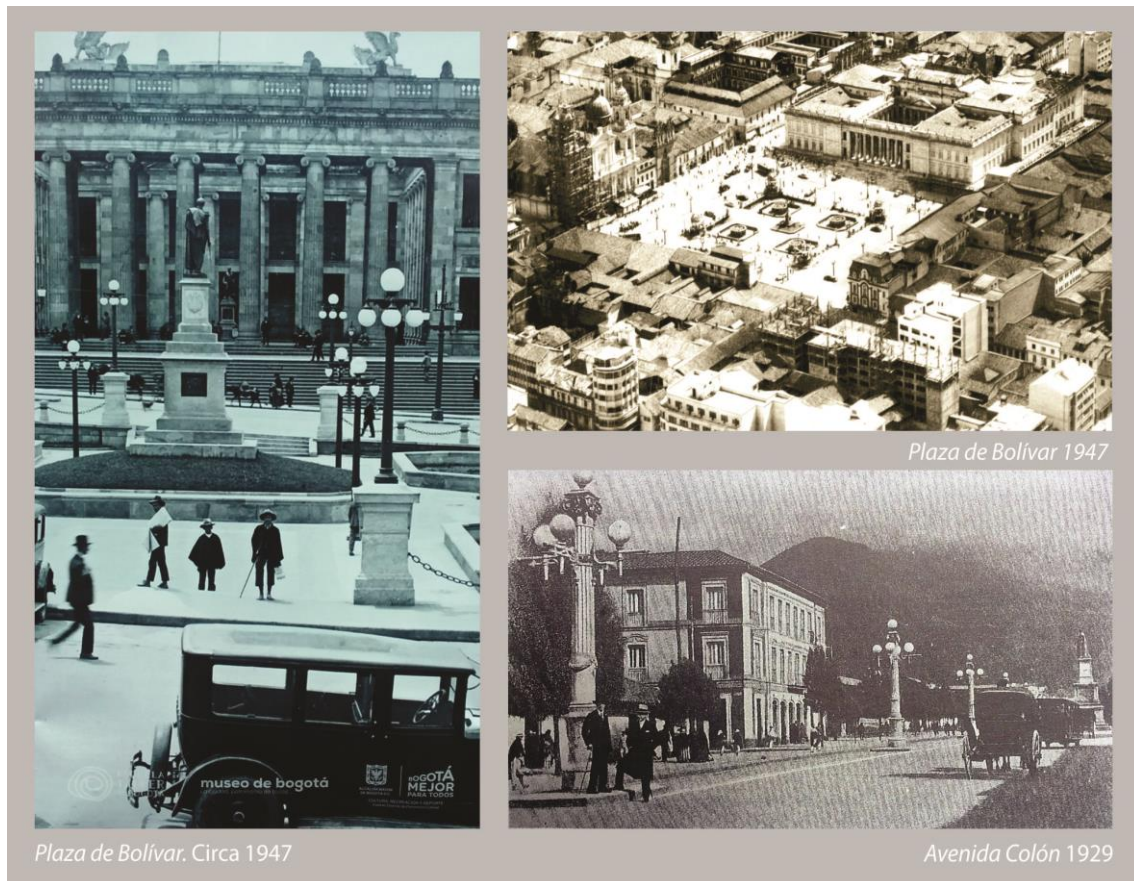
<sup>103</sup> It was only a few years ago that urban planning history researchers found proof of the existence of this plan for Bogotá.

<sup>104</sup> For further details about this sort of socio-political strategies see Guillén (1979: 507ff).

<sup>105</sup> ‘Bogotá’s Embellishment Society’ was an institution that functioned as a sort of counselor to the mayor and the city hall for urban matters. This association concentrated on punctual interventions regarding the traditional spatial structure of the city. This association also mediated between the inhabitants and the city administration. See Castillo Daza (2003: 80).

interventions and socio-spatial densification processes within the original central area of Bogotá. Concerning urban design, we identify the ‘furnishing’ of the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the construction of the *Avenida Colón* that connected the train station to the Bogotá’s city core.

Fig. 48. Furnishing noble spatial signs: Street and aerial views of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (1947), and the *Avenida Colón* (1929)



Source: Own elaboration based on *Colección Museo de Bogotá*, Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC), *Index de Colombia*

The *Plaza de Bolívar*, conceptualised in this study as the prime spatial sign of *La Hacienda*, which was ‘dressed up’ with European-bourgeois elements such as fountains and street lighting. From our perspective this ‘political landscaping’ aesthetically ratified the *Plaza de Bolívar* as the socio-spatial centre of Bogotá. However, this intervention should not be understood as a determinant re-signifying spatial phenomenon. The arrangement of these new signifiers (i.e. sidewalks, fountains, lighting, etc.) are referred to the “carnival modernity” (Guillén, 1979) and the world of appearances of *La Hacienda* in times of controlled socialization. The main functions

and ‘spatial code’ of this square remained<sup>106</sup>; in fact, the Capitol (the key spatial signifier of the birth of the nation under the dominance of *La Hacienda*) was finished according to the main characteristics of the original architectural design by the time the new landscaping in the *Plaza de Bolívar* was implemented.

The *Avenida Colón* can be interpreted in a similar way. This space was designed to resemble a French bourgeois boulevard and was marked with the statues of Queen Isabella and Christopher Columbus. It concentrated linearly diverse functions (mainly, housing, industry and commerce) along the trajectory of the colonial east-west axis. From our point of view, this intervention heightened this axis of the former colonial grid and, at the same time, provided a ‘humble French fancy dress’ to the persistent noble spatiality of Bogotá. We refer to a ‘dressed up noble spatiality’ not only because of the perpetuation of key elements of the spatial code inherited from the pre-modern period (e.g. the main configuration of the *Plaza de Bolívar*, the perpetuation of the colonial layout, etc.), but also because of the verbal and written discourses of dominant actors who strongly influenced planning and urban design during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While bourgeois (hence ‘modern’ oriented) elements such as wider sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc. were installed to change the image of the city, the political power of *La Hacienda* promoted the continuance of colonial socio-cultural values. For example, Laureano Gómez, the main promoter of the construction of the *Avenida Colón* and president in the year 1950, declared in 1937 in a public event that: “Spain, marches forward as the sole defender of Christian civilization, leads western nations towards the reconstruction of the Hispanic empire, and we sign our names on the lists of the phalanges with ineffable satisfaction (...) Long live the imperial Catholic Spain!”. These contradictions between ‘discourse’ and (feeble) transformations of urban spaces run by the state are essential and need to be read spatially regarding the emergent crisis of *La Hacienda* at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is a crisis that involves the enforced maintenance of pre-modern values that are concealed through a veil of urban/physical changes related to a particular type of ‘modernisation’.

Such modernisation propelled particular socio-spatial densification processes in Bogotá. In this regard, we identify the construction of significant buildings related to the

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<sup>106</sup> See semiotic analysis of this space above.

first years of the ‘successful introduction’ of the ISI in the 1930s. These buildings were hotels, banks, new firms’ office buildings, new ministries, and institutions of technical education which were linked to the re-organisation of the state and the needs of the emerging industrial elite; which, according to J.Jaramillo, required, “the collaboration of a technical elite and of an efficient labour force which could not be supplied by illiterate population” (quoted in Niño, 1991: 73). Some of the buildings constructed in this context were the Stock of Bogotá (1936), the *Banco de Bogotá* (1929), the *Banco Alemán Antioqueño* (1929), and the *Compañía Colombiana de Seguros* (1934), the *Banco hipotecario de Colombia* and the *Banco de Colombia*, and the *Instituto Técnico Central* (Central Institute for Technical Education).

Most of these buildings were mainly arranged according to the traditional axes, subdivisions and spacing of the noble grid. The only variance in reference to the urban layout was the concentration at the crossroad located nearby the former *Plazuela de la Yerba* composed by the *Carrera Séptima* (former *Calle Real del Comercio*) and the *Avenida Jiménez*. The *Avenida Jiménez* was planned and built between the 1920s and 1930s on the riverbed of the *Río San Francisco* (i.e. the stream that divided the area dominated by the *humilladero* and the *Plaza de Armas*) and therefore acquired a sinuous course framed by the different institutional and commercial buildings.

This linear spatial concentration along the new *Avenida Jiménez* was a ‘break’ in terms of the typical rectilinear spatiality informed by the noble grid which had defined the oldest quarters of the city. However, the *Avenida Jiménez*’ construction was mostly driven by functional requirements and by a general plan that consisted in widening and “monumentalising” (Perilla, 2008: 98) some of the existing streets of the noble grid; in fact, the avenue was named after the city founder, a main representative of *La Encomienda*. Thus, the aim of the new avenue’s construction did not deliberately involve a semiotic shift of the city’s spatial structure. The new *Avenida Jiménez* had the essential functional purpose of enhancing the city centre’s local, regional and national accessibility. This enhancement meant the physical link of the *Avenida Jiménez* to the *Avenida Colón*, the main train station (where different tram lines ended) and the road that led to remote regions, fluvial and maritime ports (i.e. today’s *Calle 13* or *Salida a Fontibón*).



Fig. 49. The crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez* and the *Carrera Séptima* (1930)



Source: Public domain. Wikipedia

Consequently, the main outcomes in terms of the city's spatial structure were the reinforcement of the traditional east-west axis and the configuration of the new core (i.e. the crossroad mentioned above) located next to the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area. This new core has been characterised as a key referent of “a first modernity” (Arango, 1996: 76; Perilla, 2008: 80) in Bogotá characterised by the “consolidation of the centre and a new periphery (...)” (Arango, 1996: 76). However, we strongly doubt the idea that ‘a first modernity’ replaced the pre-modern city socially nor spatially<sup>107</sup>. The emergence of this new core (composed by the crossroad of the *Carrera Séptima* and the *Avenida Jiménez*) can be better interpreted from the identification of the outburst of the ‘imposed modernisation’; its success relied on not affecting the socio-political and cultural roots of *La Hacienda*.

This contradictory condition of ‘change’ without a true transformation involves spatial signs and structures. As mentioned above, the colonial layout was not threatened within the take-off of *La Hacienda*'s ISI. This layout, which is a key significant structure of the noble city, was ‘monumentalised’ to organise the new spatial signs (i.e. the referents of the elitist industrialisation). The spatial concentration of these signs took place around the new core (i.e. the crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez* and the *Carrera Séptima*) which presupposed a spatial juxtaposition in reference to the *Plaza de Bolívar*. This juxtaposition meant the no affectation of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s visual prevalence and spatial code. In particular, the main buildings of the new core (which appear as ‘a plinth’ of a North American skyscraper) did not threat the verticality of sacral elements such as the cathedral's belfries.

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<sup>107</sup> See socio-spatial descriptions and characterisation of the *Avenida Jiménez* in Arango (1996: 78).

This spatial condition characterised by the untouched ‘functional and semiotic coherence’ of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (i.e. La Hacienda’s main spatial sign) and its coexistence with the new core at the mentioned crossroad (i.e. the referent of the first successful years of the ISI) can be further analysed through observations of the spatial practices and representations of these central spaces. The journalist (and literature noble prize) Gabriel García Márquez, who daily experienced the crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez* and the *Carrera Séptima* in the 1940s, described this central space as a contradiction between a lugubrious city whose inhabitants were still nostalgic of the Spanish colony, and a locus of busy urban life characterised by the presence of the emergent media, crowded trams and (a peculiar) otherness. Merchants, politicians, journalists and poets, all dressed in black (‘like the king our lord *Felipe IV*’), used to meet within this crossroad. According to García Márquez, the main referent was the clock placed on the belfry of the *Iglesia de San Francisco* (i.e. the original temple of the former place of the *humilladero*) which served as main collective orientation: ‘the men paused on the street or interrupt the talk at the coffee to adjust their watches with the official time of the church’<sup>108</sup>.

In sum, the concentric trend of Bogotá was reinforced, and to some extent, revived the structure composed by two main cores which was so characteristic of the 16<sup>th</sup> century i.e. the coexistence and rivalry between the *Plaza de Armas* and the *Pazuela de la Yerba*. However, the contradictory linear spatial pattern inherited from the previous period also intensified. This consisted in the growth towards south and particularly towards north which involved the expansion around Chapinero’s centre and along its physical connection to Bogotá’s traditional built space.

This linear pattern started to disrupt Bogotá’s concentric unity more clearly. There is no doubt that the linear disposition of transport technologies (regional trains and trams) towards the northern periphery of Bogotá influenced this phenomenon. Yet,

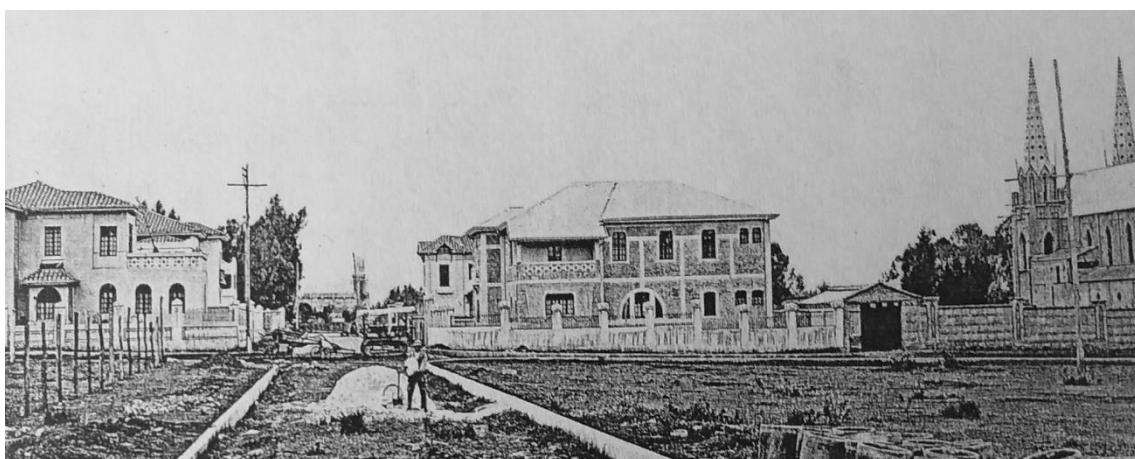
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<sup>108</sup> We provide here the original text of García Márquez: “*La vida en Colombia, desde muchos puntos de vista, seguía en el siglo XIX. Sobre todo en la Bogotá lúgubre de los años cuarenta, todavía nostálgica de la colonia.... Para comprobarlo bastaba con sumergirse en el centro neurálgico de la carrera Séptima y la Avenida Jiménez de Quesada, bautizado por la desmesura bogotana como la ‘mejor esquina del mundo’.* Cuando el reloj público de la torre de San Francisco daba las doce del día, los hombres se detenían en la calle o interrumpían la charla en el café para ajustar los relojes con la hora oficial de la iglesia. Alrededor de ese crucero, y en las cuadras adyacentes, estaban los sitios más concurridos donde se citaban dos veces al día los comerciantes, los políticos, los periodistas –y los poetas por supuesto-, todos de negro hasta los pies vestidos, como el rey nuestro señor don Felipe IV (...).” Quoted in Perilla (2008: 84f).

we claim that this disruption of the concentric pattern of the city is rather related to the legacies of noble spatial practices in a context of commoditisation of land, demographic growth and the increasing dominance of mercantile life in Bogotá. This disruption will be addressed further below when we approach the following decades when Bogotá's socio-spatial crisis unfolds.

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning here that the evident physical growth within Bogotá's northern surroundings during the 1920s was primarily characterised by the enforcement of Chapinero's religious iconic character. This was achieved via the construction of isolated new sacral vertical elements (churches with gothic features such as *La Porciúncula* and the church of the *Monasterio de la Visitación de Santa María*<sup>109</sup>) which appeared more dominant than the few secular educational institutions built during those years in that area e.g. the horizontal building of the *Instituto Pedagógico Nacional*. The enforcement of such religious iconicity corresponds to other spatial facts, principally, to the unregulated subdivision of *haciendas* for the construction of a varied sort of residential spaces (e.g. *quintas* and *barrios/neighbourhoods*). This construction of residences mainly responded to the preferences of highly influential social groups and other subordinated sectors which were driven by the persistence of traditional "noble" aspects such as the strong need to confirm social status rather than by true modern conditions.

Fig. 50. Enforcement of Chapinero's religious iconic character. Crossroad *Carrera 11* and *Avenida Chile* circa 1920. Source: Unknown



<sup>109</sup> These religious spatial elements were introduced and somewhat aligned with the traditional *Nuestra señora de Lourdes Church* towards north. This sort of arrangement of vertical elements was complemented with the erection of similar elements between Bogotá and Chapinero mainly, the gothic style *Nuestra Señora de Chiquinquirá Church* whose construction began in 1925 at the *Camino Nuevo* or *Carrera 13* upon which the main tram line was functioning.



In the course of the 1930s and 1940s the ISI model, run by *La Hacienda*, was further developed. Bogotá's linear-concentric trend strengthened but within the application of new spatial strategies that emerged according to social conjunctions. The following paragraphs further address the socio-political forces of this spatial process and its particularities.

*The partial concession of spatial rights, citybildung and the ratification of La Hacienda's main spatial signs*

The 1930s emerges as a key period in which a moderated rural and urban re-structuring took place at a national level. Drawing on Guillén (1979) and Niño (1991) such 'moderated change' was the result of the pressure of unionist activity in the country within the years of the world crisis. In those years the process of controlled socialization supposed a political shift managed from the traditional elite. This shift consisted in the establishment of a new political coalition (*La Concentración Nacional*) that permitted the relief of conservative leadership and the entrance of a moderated liberal presidential figure (Enrique Olaya Herrera) who allowed a wide political participation of conservative politicians and manifested his intention to promote reforms without threatening the status quo, in particular, the condition of Catholicism as the religion of the State and its essentiality in Colombia's social order.

This "clever transition" (Guillén, 1979) led to the strategic *Revolución en Marcha* (Revolution in Motion) which appeared as the highest expression of the capturing of the 'socialist challenge' within the traditional liberal party. Defeating a communist party in an election in which the conservative party did not participate, the liberal party continued in the presidency with Alfonso López Pumarejo, an international banker, merchant and exporter who belonged to the lineage of traditional elites. President Pumarejo wisely introduced the discourse of a non-Marxist/non-classist revolution that was thought to be developed within the existing institutional framework guaranteeing assurances to the unions, education and economic opportunities to 'the people' (*el pueblo*).

However, the strong historic values of *La Hacienda* in the context of imposed industrialisation resisted stubbornly any sort of re-structuration. The intended political objectives within the context of controlled socialization resulted in deep demographic changes, particularly, in a great rural-urban migration driven not only by the attraction

of industrial activities and cultural facilities located in major cities but also by the actions taken by powerful *hacendados* (Guillén, 1979). According to Niño (1991: 98) and Guillén (1979: 514), sharecroppers and workers who were returning from the cities (because of the urban unemployment that affected the country during the first years of the 1930s) were largely expelled by *hacendados* who feared to confront the demands of migrant nonconformist groups (e.g. land, better working conditions, etc.) and to lose, in the long run, the legal domain over their country estates as well as the social and symbolic control over the sharecroppers who still had strong servile values. One of the best known outcomes of this conjuncture is the presence and then the generalization of slums in major cities. This highly conflictive situation conditioned and limited the main objectives of the so-called *Revolución en Marcha*: the introduction of a productive social function to rural land by providing rights to small tenants, and ‘the integration’ (and capturing) of ‘the masses’ to the cities which were partly composed by new nonconformist groups<sup>110</sup>.

The ‘urban integration’ intended by the political class had no precedents in Colombia’s social and urban history. Plans of expansion and spatial specialisation (hence diversification) of Bogotá were rejected before organised groups exercised social and political pressure in the 1920s. We particularly refer to the plan *Bogotá Futuro* (1919) mentioned above which was created according to ‘city planning techniques’ external to the socio-cultural world of *La Hacienda*<sup>111</sup>. The highly introverted Colombian society, characterised by the prevalence of this associative structure, had obstructed communication and cultural exchange even in the context of the ISI. A sign of this obstruction was the applying of political guidelines that prevented the arrival of migrants, a phenomenon that contrasted to the conceptual and political framework of other countries of the region such as Argentina and Brazil where immigration was supported since the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The plan *Bogotá Futuro* was not reintroduced or recaptured in the context of the socio-political conjuncture of the *Revolución en Marcha* and its intended ‘urban

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<sup>110</sup> Such groups were composed by people who were pulled out from socialist movements to enlarge the social base of the Liberal party and abandoned to the whim of urban employers without any support of traditional rural kinship networks. In particular, nonconformist urban groups included former peasants who became workers of the construction sector during the 1920s and participated in union struggles. This condition detached them from servile values. See further details about social transformations of the time in Niño (1991: 97ff) and Guillén (1979: 507ff).

<sup>111</sup> See description above.

integration'. Instead, Bogotá's municipal authorities hired Karl Brunner, an Austrian city planner who had planning experience in Santiago de Chile. Hofer (2003: 77/92) indicates that Brunner's interests were connected to the revision and critique of the urbanism of the nineteenth-century European city, the planning and design of urban social housing, sanitation and the ease of congestion in city centres. Brunner's actions in Bogotá were linked to these interests but also strongly conditioned by the moderated transformations and dominant actors' disapproval of key objectives of the *Revolución en Marcha*. In this regard, Brunner (as director of Bogotá's first Urbanism Department) struggled "to persuade" (Hofer, 2003: 92) the authorities to save and ensure land to develop social housing which was, until then, off of the agenda.

We identify three aspects concerning urban planning and spatial tendencies within the initial and most intense years of the so-called 'revolution in motion':

- First, the partial concession of spatial rights to workers and employees who were 'carried' to socially homogeneous spaces called *barrios obreros* and *barrios/casas para empleados* separated from the nascent residential spaces of the upper classes (*barrios residenciales*). In this case, Brunner's general plans were fully supported which facilitated the configuration of a periphery characterised by a strong spatial segregation and polarization aestheticized through spatial features of the North American 'City-beautiful' movement e.g. the neighbourhood-unit<sup>112</sup>. Most *barrios obreros* were located in the south whilst the majority of *barrios* or *casas para empleados* were planned to be separated, but much closer to the *barrios residenciales* i.e. the neighbourhoods of the upper classes. In reference to Bogotá's spatial polarization planning, it is worth paying attention to the spatial configuration and location of the southern *barrios obreros* of *Ciudad Jardín*, *Luna Park*, *20 de Julio*, *Barrio Santander*, *Olaya Herrera*, *Centenario*, *Inglés* and *Santa Lucía* in relation to the northern *barrios obreros* of *Jorge Eliecer Gaitán*, *Modelo Norte*, and *San Fernando* which were located close to the *barrios para empleados* of *Muequetá*, *Calderón Tejada* and *Divino Salvador*.

- Second, a clear distinction of collective practices (*citybildung*<sup>113</sup>), particularly with the separation of the spaces of politics-religiosity and those of exchange activities which

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<sup>112</sup> See other perspectives and further descriptions about Brunner's urban planning principles for Latin American and Colombian cities in Hofer (2003: 115ff) and Arango (1990: 199ff).

<sup>113</sup> In this sense, we stand much closer to Lichtenberger's definition of *citybildung* than to the meaning suggested by Bähr and Mertins (1995).

were needed to establish and maintain the ISI. From our point of view, this morphological, locational and functional separation ensured the semiotic hierarchy and pureness of the space of politics and religiosity. A hypothetical overlapping of these collective practices could have threatened the spatial code of the main sign of *La Hacienda* i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar*. This configuration can be observed in the juxtaposition of the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the new core that emerged at the crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez* and the *Carrera Séptima*.

Fig. 51. Separation of collective practices within the noble grid. Aerial photographs of the years 1936/48

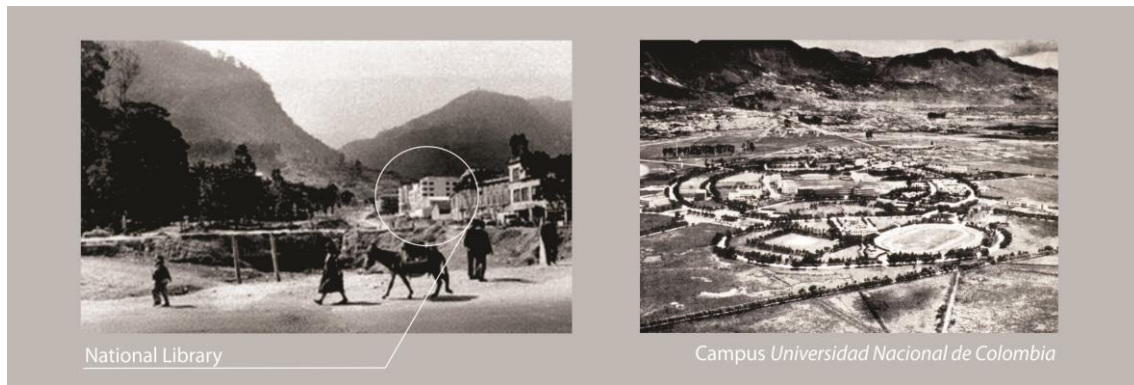


Source: *Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi* (IGAC) and *Fundación Le Corbusier*. ©FLC - ADAGP

- Third, the ratification of the main spatial signs of *La Hacienda* and their hierarchical organisation in relation to new types of signifiers. In this sense, we identify two specific phenomena.

On the one hand, the peripheralization and isolation of the first National Library and the campus of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* which featured ‘modern’ aesthetics. These two spaces appear, in this transitory period, as the spatial signifiers of the moderated secularization of the state and the spatial representation and access to (secular) ‘knowledge’. However, from a semiotic perspective, the location of these two spatial signs of emerging institutions diminished their representativeness and hence their meaning within the general spatial arrangement. While the library was placed in the outskirts of the traditional city, the campus was built in a remote area and isolated from the main elements of the city’s spatial structure i.e. axes, sub-centres, key infrastructure, etc.

Fig. 52. Peripheralized secular signifiers (1930s).  
National Library and campus *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*



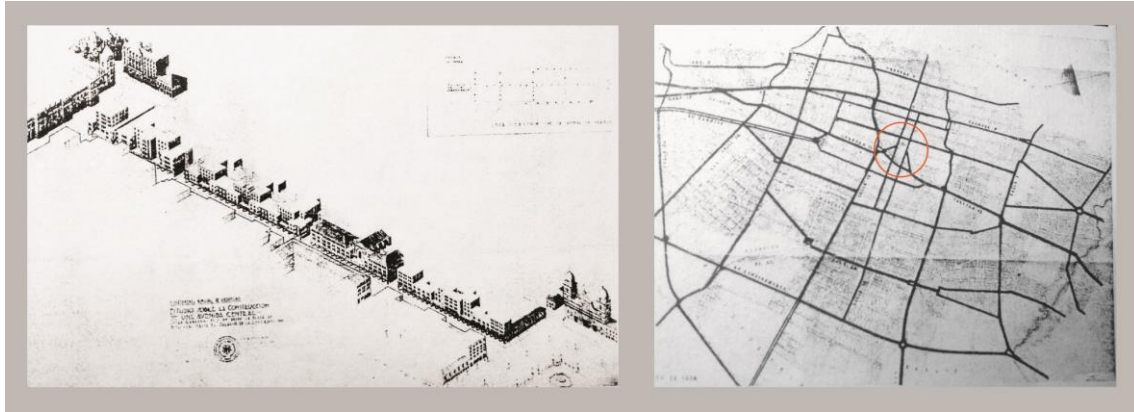
Source: *El Espectador*. Galeria-468473 and [agenciadenoticias.unal.edu.co](http://agenciadenoticias.unal.edu.co)

And on the other hand, the disregard of the urban plans developed by Karl Brunner who, according to Hofer's (2003) descriptions, sought to remove the noble aura of the city considering his own urban design experience in Santiago de Chile (see fig. 23). These projects were aimed at re-coding (only moderately) the main spatial sign of *La Hacienda* i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar* (see figure below). We highlight the case of the project of the axial *La Nueva Avenida Central* (1935) which was intended to link, in functional and semiotic terms, the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the new core of the *Avenida Jiménez*. The materialization of this project (and of further proposals such as two diagonal streets heading towards the *Plaza de Bolívar*), would have affected the *Plaza*'s original condition as 'unique' sign of (colonial) authority as well as the *plaza*'s essential physical features which constitute the 'ground' of the *Plaza* (if we regard this space as a signifier).

The new central avenue would have introduced a new hierarchical access that challenges the visual predominance of the cathedral. The project of the *Nueva Avenida Central* sought to visually relate the signifier of 'democracy' (i.e. the Capitol located at the southern edge of the *Plaza*) and a building related to the presence of regional power i.e. the *Gobernacion de Cundinamarca* which was located at the northern end of the proposed axis. This configuration would not only have diminished the cathedral's predominance (which was deliberately kept by the Capitol's designer) but had also created a new single sign composed by the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the core of the *Avenida Jiménez*. From our perspective this spatial transformation was simply not possible

within the cultural and socio-political conditions of the time: *La Hacienda*'s political power was sacral and had to remain untouched!

Fig. 53. Disregard of re-coding urban projects. Plan for the *Nueva Avenida Central* (1935) and diagonal streets heading towards the *Plaza de Bolívar* (1936)



Source: Konrad Brunner Archive

In sum, this transitory period is characterised by a particular relationship between spatial specialisation (periphery) and spatial concentration (centre) within the territory. Whilst the city's periphery was configured through the planning and construction of three different kinds of socially and spatially segregated residential neighbourhoods, higher densities were allowed in the city-centre where the traditional urban centrality code was maintained.

*The proposition of new spatial strategies: a Political-C.B.D and the maintenance of La Hacienda's main spatial signs*

The proposition of spatial strategies in relation to urban centrality in Bogotá converged with a set of particular phenomena during the 1940s. Drawing on Guillén (1979), Niño (1991), Niño and Reina (2010), during those years the political elite realized that the so-called 'revolution in motion' had gone too far and therefore a 'pause' was needed. This implied the capturing of new divergent social forces within the paternalist traditional political parties, predominantly, the unions that were promoted by the government during the 1930s<sup>114</sup>. However, this situation took place along with

<sup>114</sup> The conservative party exercised a strong opposition but did not present any candidate for the presidential elections of 1938. Once again in power and after promoting and legalizing the formation of the Confederation of Workers of Colombia (CTC - *Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia*), the Liberal party looked to divide the unions and took the leadership of the CTC. This manoeuvre was possible because the initial activities and success of the CTC depended on the government's support. In

the emergence of numerous socio-economic and cultural ‘associations’ which essentially involved the existence of divergent models to reach and exercise power (i.e. different from the traditional political parties or the church). This condition appears as the unavoidable price paid by the political elites to maintain their dominant position (via the ISI) and overcome the social conflicts that took place during the 1920s. Consequently, two related trends started to coexist.

The first trend was the consolidation of such associations which implied the acquirement of a “consciousness,” (Guillén, 1979: 497) regarding their leadership in the society with the support of different institutions (e.g. media, new and former educational institutions, the church). In regard to the socio-economic realm, the highly privileged industrial entrepreneurs presented themselves as ‘the leaders and planners of the new economy’ - leaders fixed to ‘rigorous technical criteria’ in order to sustain their concepts and actions. They were grouped in numerous associations, such as, *La Asociación Bancaria* – 1936 (banking sector), *Asociación Nacional de Industrias* ANDI – 1944 (industries/manufacture), *La Federación Nacional de Comerciantes* FENALCO – 1945 (merchants/trade), *FEDEARROZ* – 1947 (agriculture), and *La Lonja de Propiedad Raíz* – 1948 (real estate), etc. (Guillén, 1979).

The cultural realm, on the other hand, followed the same logic of imposition and import of models in favour of the reproduction of *La Hacienda*. In this regard, the conformation and consolidation of the SCA - Colombian Architects Society<sup>115</sup> (*Sociedad Colombiana de Arquitectos* - 1934) played a key role because it was through this association that ‘modernising’ spatial codes and principles were replaced in just a few years. Brunner’s city planning model rapidly became unfashionable and was substituted for extreme, rational and functionalist representations of space, principally, the CIAM principles which were dogmatically introduced and (partially) applied by the established power. From our perspective, this import of models or urban/architectonic paradigms appears as a logical outcome during those years because the task of spatially representing a social transformation that does not exist in reality (or that does not fully develop) is an activity that inevitably leads to the production of ‘empty signifiers’ i.e.

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turn, the CTC had to provide to the Liberal Party an electoral base and to guarantee socio-political loyalties (Niño, 1991: 108; Guillén, 1979: 515)

<sup>115</sup> This association evolved from the politics of higher education during the first years of the so called Revolution in Motion of the 1930s. The main product was the first faculty of architecture whose first graduated students started to work and to influence the social arena during the 1940s.

spatial signs which do not refer to true spatial practices and values of a society as a whole. In this regard, the professional activity of the young architects and city planners during the period of crises of *La Hacienda* consisted in concealing through their (apparent) modern creations the predominance of traditional spatial practices.

The second trend was the confirmation and brutal restitution of ‘authority’ which included both, the social and spatial dimensions. The social dimension was characterised by the dismantling of rights of rural and urban popular sectors of the population. On the one hand, there was a sort of counter agrarian reform in 1944 that aimed to re-establish sharecropping and extend the term of reversion of vacant or uncultivated areas to the state (in any case such reversion had never been applied). Moreover, such counter-reform supported the conformation of great rural properties e.g. the fights against settlers and the prohibition of permanent crops by sharecroppers who were embedded in the upsurge of the *violencia partidaria*<sup>116</sup>. The major outcome of such conjunction was the augmentation of rural exodus to the cities<sup>117</sup> which were never absorbed as industrial labour because of the nature of the *capitalismo hacendatario*. In the industrial sector this can be observed in the lack of private investment and subsequent scarcity of jobs. On the other hand, unionist conflicts and protests continued in the more crowded cities but received less support from the government, no legal recognition, and repression.

In reference to the spatial dimension, we claim that Bogotá’s traditional urban centrality appeared as a key functional and semiotic material for the accomplishment of two interrelated objectives: first, the spatial representation (self-recognition) of the new powerful associations which were highly related to the traditional political elites; and second, the restoration of authority or, more precisely put, ‘the survival of authoritarianism’. The main spatial strategy applied to achieve these objectives was the

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<sup>116</sup> According to several authors, the *violencia partidaria* (a sort of political violence) focused on rural areas and was promoted by high political spheres and other institutions such as the church through the promotion of ‘hate’. This was already a historical aspect inherent to *La Hacienda*. It was used to ensure vertical loyalties to the two (policlassist) political parties which, on the one hand, had the same posture towards the major social problems of the country and its solutions; and on the other hand, attempted to appropriate the same bureaucratic positions. During the years of crisis being described, the method of promotion of hate was a persistent tool of the Elite within the context of the ISI.

<sup>117</sup> From 1938 to 1945 350.000 people migrated to the cities which meant the 20% of the whole rural population. From 1938 to 1951 the growth rate of the urban population was 4.5% annual average (68% due to migration and 32% due to natural growth) whilst in the countryside the growth rate was only 1.4% (J.Bejarano quoted in Niño, 1991: 109). During the same period, Bogotá’s population grew from 330.312 in 1938 to 715.250 in 1951. At the beginning of the 1970’s Bogotá’s population was about 2.800.000 people. See more information about demographical changes in Saldarriaga (2006: 82).



creation of a sort of ‘political-C.B.D.’<sup>118</sup> within Bogotá’s cityscape. Just as the privileging politics of the ISI, the erection of this sort of C.B.D (which is known as *La Carrera Décima*) was the main purpose that persisted despite the increasing social conflicts and the fragmentary application of numerous modern/functionalist master plans.

A key date in the development of the political-C.B.D project was the year 1945 when the media highlighted the designation of the new mayor<sup>119</sup>, the doctor Juan Pablo Llinás, hoping that his detachment of political compromises would give him independence to act, and consequently, “enable the city to recover the authority lost because of the unionist agitations” (quoted in Niño & Reina, 2010: 60). At the same time, the dominant newspapers supported the intention of doctor Llinás to build a central, 40 metres wide, mixed-use avenue staged by twelve-storey-buildings across the city centre from north to south. In this regard, the discourse of the media highlighted the pertinence of this project to change the ‘ugly’ and ‘old’ outlook of the city, open ‘progress perspectives’ and solve urgent traffic, hygienic, and parking problems<sup>120</sup>.

Subsequently, the city appeared as having serious functional difficulties (e.g. lack of proper hygiene, accessibility, lack of space for parking and circulation of modern traffic), but also ‘semiotic problems’, namely the incapacity to communicate ‘progress’ and ‘authority’. This situation implied a weakening of the essential and historic meaning (signified) of the city i.e. a central space denoting ‘authoritarian power’. For the groups in power, this set of problems required a drastic solution: the conception and radical introduction of a new and foreign city centre type (a C.B.D) within the existing built space.

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<sup>118</sup> The selection of this concept implies three aspects: first, the questioning to Bähr’s and Mertins’ (2006/1995) generalization of the concept of *citybildung* for the Latin American context; second, the conceptual and methodological divergence in reference to Niño’s and Reina’s (2010) use of the notion of ‘street’ or ‘great avenue’ to approach the modernisation process of Bogotá’s original city centre; and third, a variation of the notion provided by Hassenpflug (2006a) which addresses other period (post-industrial or post-fordist period) and socio-cultural contexts (Europe, China). As such, we borrow this concept considering that, in general, the notion of ‘political-C.B.D’ refers to a ‘conceived’ space and to a ‘socio-political centrality’ (Hassenpflug, 2006a) that expresses characteristics of a foreign cultural geography (particularly, North American). However, in the case study Bogotá the concept of ‘political-C.B.D’ does not have relation to an attempt to substitute the regulatory power exercised via politics for “liberal market solutions” (Hassenpflug, 2006a). Instead, the concept refers in this case to a spatial strategy that is connected to the representations of space of dominant actors who benefited the establishing of monopolistic economic groups that are conflated with the oligarchical political elite.

<sup>119</sup> At this point it is worth clarifying the fact that the position of mayor of Bogotá was subject of political appointment and removal until 1988. Resultantly, the mayor was designated by the governor of the province of Cundinamarca who was equally appointed by the president.

<sup>120</sup> *El Tiempo* and *El Siglo* newspapers. Quoted in Niño and Reina (2010: 60ff)

From our perspective, it is possible to identify a series of aspects connected to ‘the logic and dialectic of urban centrality’. These aspects explain the spatial conception of the project of the political-C.B.D and its conflictive materialization which ended up influencing the ‘spatial unfolding of the crisis’ of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá.

### *The logical dimension*

In reference to the ‘logic of urban centrality’ i.e. the organization of space, we highlight the political goal of confirming the city’s linearity via the political-C.B.D project. In this context, the use of ‘axiality’ as dominant spatial convention includes interrelated semiotic and functional aspects. On the one hand, axiality belongs to the iconography of power which can be applied according to a given social condition in which the stressing of authority is required; and on the other hand, the emphasis of the city’s linearity appeared, once again, much more ‘functional’ than the stressing of spatial concentricity for certain social groups and the reproduction of *La Hacienda*’s order at the urban scale<sup>121</sup>. From our theoretical framework, the functionality of linearity within the social conjuncture in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is strongly related to a socio-spatial phenomenon that had originated decades before and that strengthen from the 1940s onwards: the substantial emigration of the elites from the city centre and the consequent need of these powerful groups to have adequate physical access to the city’s central area.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to discuss briefly such emigration process before we continue with our analysis of the spatial conception of the political-C.B.D project. The emigration of elites is a typical issue in the urban history of Bogotá and of many other major Latin American cities. From our point of view, the association of two perspectives can better explain the general phenomenon and the particular case of Bogotá.

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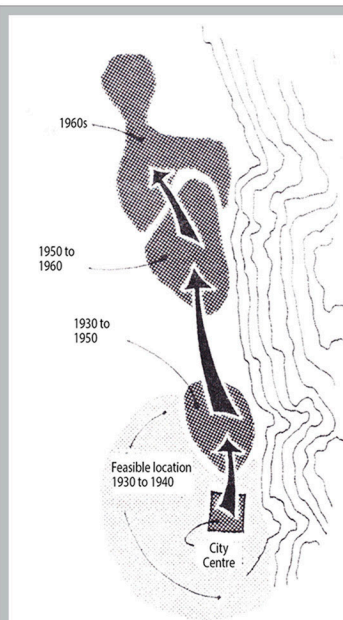
<sup>121</sup> As we previously observed, axiality and the related linear growth of the city of Bogotá appear as the spatialization of complex power relations and as the prevalence of the interests of highly influential social groups in history. The north-south linear tendency of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was produced by the conflict between the spontaneous spatial practices of the *encomenderos* and the mandatory use of the colonial grid. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the hierarchy of the north-south axis was produced by the preponderance of the noble economy’s inner relations over the evolving external mercantile practices. Finally, we noted the maximization of the city’s linearity because of the contradiction between the persisting noble spaciality of Bogotá and the increasing mercantile practices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century within Bogotá’s original core. The spatial outcome of the last period was the growth and spatial hierarchy of Chapinero.

To begin with, it is argued that this sort of migrations from Bogotá's city centre can be explained from a general thesis in urban sociology which points out that the growth of the city comes along with the effect of 'anomy'. In this regard, Jaramillo (2012: 56) affirms that during those years the spatial representativeness of the elite was severely weakened and therefore this group adapted to the new condition via a macro-socio-spatial segregation which implied the decisive migration to the evolving *barrios residenciales*. From this point of view, these new residential spaces became a key spatial instrument to achieving social privilege and the masses' respect in a context of massification and of appropriation of the city centre by different social groups e.g. rural migrants or the new industrial proletariat.

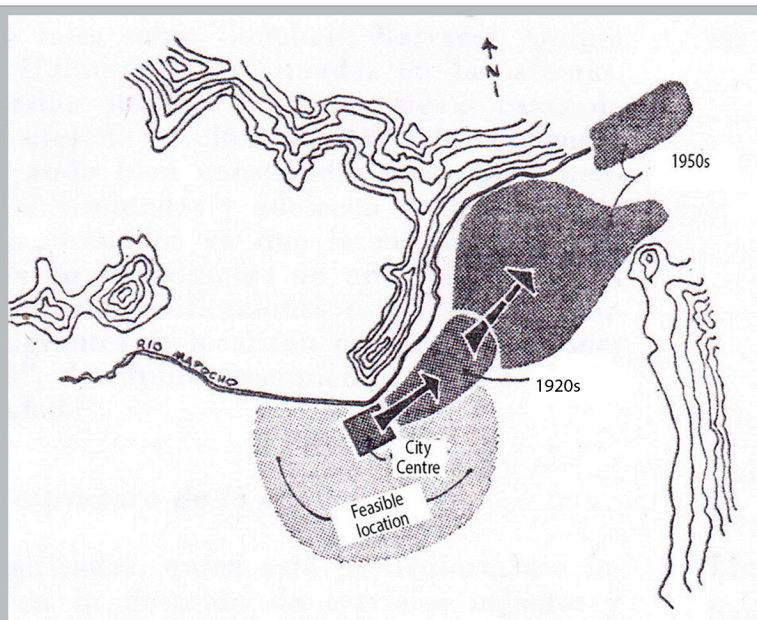
This appears as a reasonable explanation if we consider the historical roots of the strong social anxiety for prestige discussed in previous chapters. However, Jaramillo's approach neither explains the strength of the elite's exodus from the city centre nor the succeeding migration of vast sectors of the middle classes which literally followed the elites and geographically surrounded them just like in other cases of mayor Latin American capitals such as La Paz, Quito, Santiago or Lima.

From our perspective, Jaramillo's explanation can be complemented by spatializing two fundamental social and historical aspects: first, the struggle to upkeep the society's vertical social structure whose top is occupied by an elite that remains as a sort of 'social centre'; and second, the anxiety of lower social sectors to obtain prestige as a medium of upward social mobility. The relation between these two historical aspects in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be observed through the reproduction of the authoritarian elite and the emergence of a snob middle class configured and organised around a "system of recommendation," (Guillén, 1979: 548) in which appearances, kinship and favours predominate.

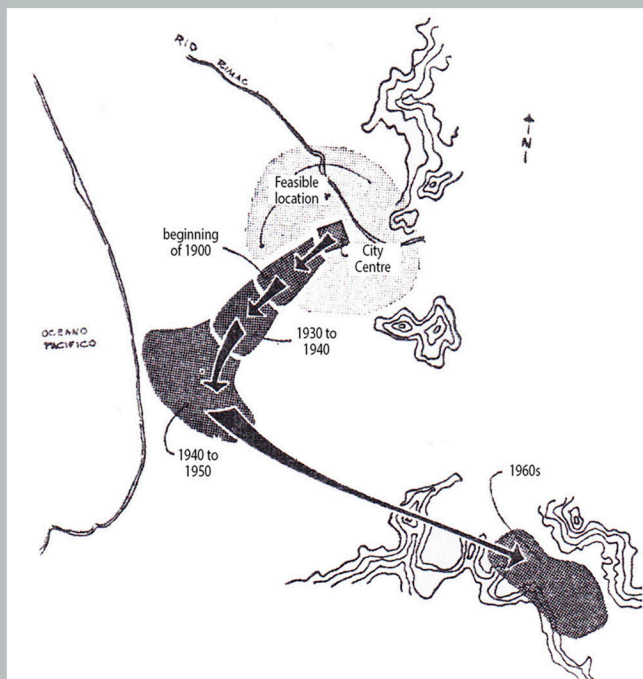
As a result, we understand the phenomena of the elite's migration and the succeeding geographical movement of sectors of the middle class as a spatial strategy to reproduce the vertical and pyramidal shape of the (oligarchical) society whose survival always depended on poly-classist loyalties. The main spatial outcome of such strategy appears as an arrangement characterised by the juxtaposition of Bogotá's original core and Chapinero's surrounding areas which received the migrations of the elite and subsequently of politically obedient sectors of the middle class. Whilst the elites were



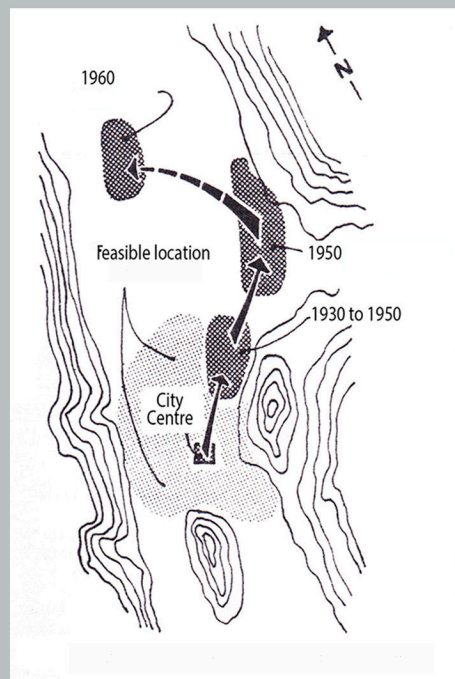
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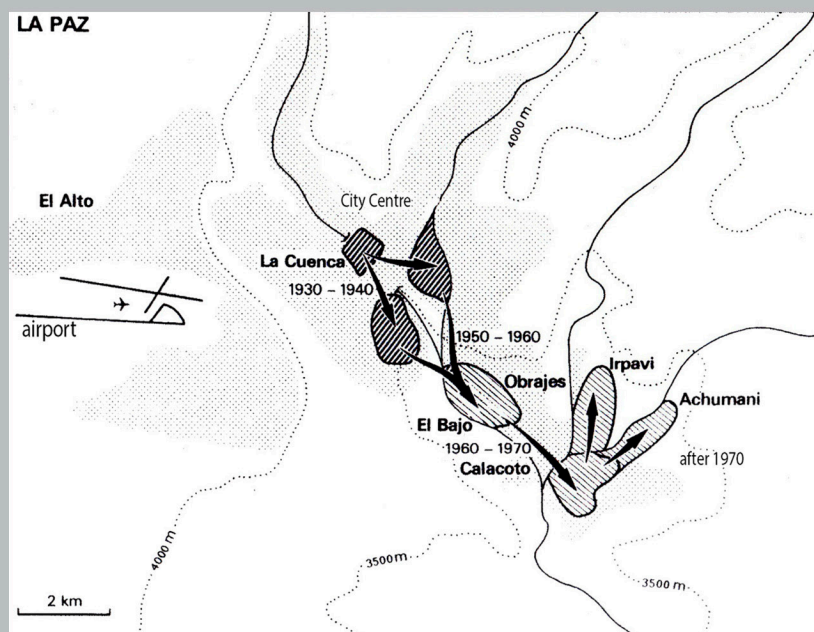
Santiago, Chile



Lima, Perú



Quito, Ecuador

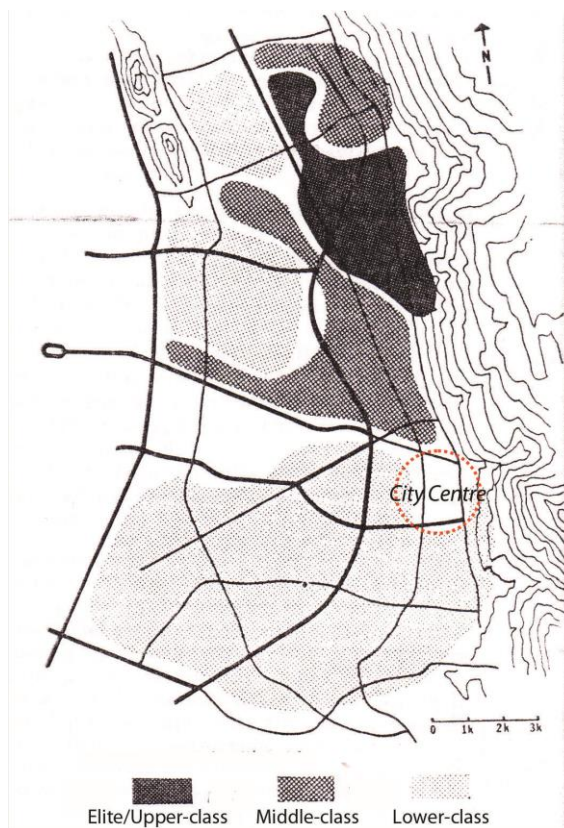


La Paz, Bolivia

Fig. 54. Migration of elite, upper and middle social sectors  
Source: Amato (1970a) and Köstner (1995). Slightly modified

looking to achieve new forms of spatial hegemony<sup>122</sup>, a considerable sector of the middle class looked to guarantee the fulfilment of their need of ‘social certainty’. In this regard, a reasonable compromise was to reside in proximity to those who offered the possibilities of social integration/welfare (jobs, related benefits, etc.) and to their new representational spaces which provided prestige i.e. a potent historical instrument to fake and achieve upward social mobility<sup>123</sup>.

Fig. 55. Reproduction of the vertical social structure through the juxtaposition of the ‘city centre’ and upper/middle class residential areas (by 1964)



Source: Amato (1970a). Slightly modified. Legend translated by the author

<sup>122</sup> That is, a sort of hegemony which was no longer possible to maintain in the city centre due to the anomy generated by massification and the impossibility to own a house in the increasingly denser city centre. According to numerous authors, the elite's rejection to own apartments in central areas was a persistent feature of the city's real estate market for many years. Up to this point we clarify that Jaramillo (2012) also uses the term 'spatial hegemony' but does not describe it. We re-elaborated the concept within the definition of pre-modern urban centrality (see conceptual framework above). It refers to a type of power in which the retention or achievement of cultural and political predominance based on consensus is informed by the presence of particular spatial signifiers.

<sup>123</sup> According to Guillén (1979: 548f), despite a considerable segment of the middle class and a substantial popular sector were still ascribed to the traditional system of socio-political vertical loyalties, the oligarchical order of *La Hacienda* was seriously weakened due to the development of alternative associations such as the unions which guaranteed other forms to exercise power and obtain social certainty. Nevertheless, the spatial practices of elites and the mimetic behaviour of considerable sectors of the middle class shaped in a decisive manner the spatial configuration of Bogotá during those years.



In such a context characterised by a clear juxtaposition of the main spatial sign of authority (the city centre) and the residential areas of those owning power and their subordinated groups, the most coherent strategic response was the opening of a monumental axis that provided a socially adequate, fast and easy accessibility to the locus of authority and decision-making i.e. the area of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. Considering Niño's and Reina's (2010) detailed historical survey, it is possible to identify that the initial project of the so called 'new centric avenue' was planned in such a manner that it would cross the city's oldest area from north to south. This trajectory would permit the spatial proximity of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (i.e. highest spatial sign of authority) to the new avenue (or in our terms, the political-C.B.D) whose extremes points would be more or less equidistantly located in regard to this historical square.

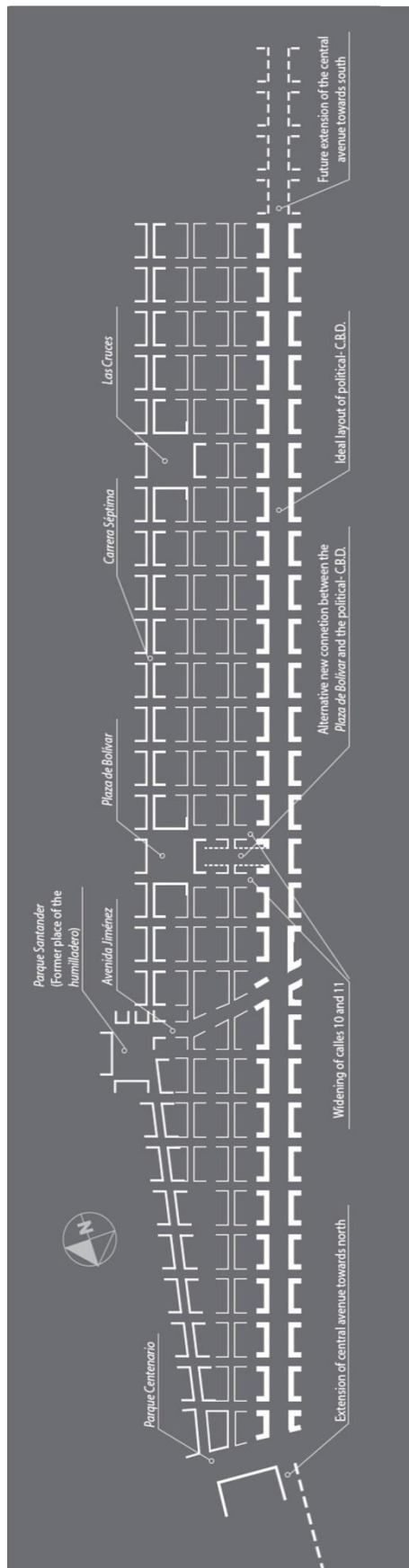
Fig. 56. Initial planned trajectory of the political-C.B.D. Newspaper article 1947.  
The 'central avenue' was finally connected to the *Carrera Séptima* acquiring a straight linear design



Source: *El Espectador*

An initial spatial analysis would suggest the prevalence of a highly functional approach which emphasised the problem of accessibility/mobility in an already polarized territory (i.e. north = wealthy social sectors; south = popular/poor sectors). Nevertheless, it is possible to recognise a set of semiotic responses to the social conditions of the time i.e. a strong struggle to exercise power and reaffirm authority. Regarding the presentative and representative condition of spatial signs, we observe that the initial project of 'the central avenue' pointed towards the maintenance of the morphological features (e.g. shape, scale, etc.), framing institutions as well as the indexical character of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (i.e. its condition as indicative sign of socio-spatial centrality) through the balanced location and proximity of the political-C.B.D.

Fig. 57. Ideal general plan of political-C.B.D



Source: Own elaboration (mainly based on written discourses)

Additionally, the socio-spatial centrality of the historical square would have been enhanced via the widening of a street that connects this traditional space to the monumental political-C.B.D.<sup>124</sup> whose predominant horizontal skyline would not threaten the verticality of sacral elements e.g. the cathedral's belfries or the church of *El Voto Nacional*<sup>125</sup>. Thus, the materialization of such project was meant to renew and enhance the iconicity of the whole spatial arrangement and consequently its interpretative potential as prime spatial sign of authority. Not to mention that the conceived connection between the two spaces would have made more evident the link between the political and economic powers of society.

### *The dialectical dimension*

With regard to the dynamics of the 'dialectic of urban centrality'<sup>126</sup>, we observe that the spatial conception of the political-C.B.D i.e. its location, morphology, etc. was directed towards the selective obliteration of socio-spatial contradictions 'perceived' by dominant actors in Bogotá's city centre. In this regard, it is essential to pay attention to the establishment of the "urban image" (Gottdiener, 1986a) and therefore to the contradictions of dominant representations of space established by prevailing urban planning journals (e.g. the *revista PROA*), newspapers (e.g. *El Siglo*, *El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*), the city administration and several local and foreign consultants that played a key role in the promotion of the political-C.B.D project and in the maintenance

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<sup>124</sup> Evidence regarding the intention to connect these spaces is indicated in Niño and Reina (2010) and in the figure below 'Ideal general plan of the political-C.B.D'. However, there is a contradiction between written and graphic evidences. In the original plan of the project there is a new street that connects in an axial manner the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the new 'Central Avenue'. This would have provoked a re-coding of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area similar to the one proposed by Brunner with the *Avenida Central* of 1935 (see analysis of this project above). At the same time, other evidence suggests the "numerous proposals to widen the *calle 10* or the *calle 11*" (Niño & Reina, 2010: 65) to connect the new 'Central Avenue' and the *Plaza de Bolívar*. This widening would have involved the maintenance of the colonial grid within the introduction of the political-C.B.D. project. In reference to the city's indexical value of centrality in the context of the political-C.B.D project we would like to underline the following: the middle point of the main and initial section of the political-C.B.D coincided more or less to the central axis of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. However, this initial representation of the political-C.B.D did not exclude the future extension of the political-C.B.D's central avenue towards north and south. These are extensions which would have (to some extent) decentred the *Plaza de Bolívar* in spatial terms. Nevertheless, what we underline is the initial and powerful referential value of the *Plaza de Bolívar* in the imaging of the modernisation of Bogotá.

<sup>125</sup> As mentioned above the political-C.B.D was strictly regulated from the beginning in terms of heights and setbacks. The maximum height was 12 storeys which was a rule that could only be modified in particular cases.

<sup>126</sup> According to our theoretical-methodological framework informed by Lefebvrian thought, the dialectic of centrality refers to the artificial generation of scarcity of space when a centre is created. Therefore, dialectic has to do in this context with the gathering of everything that is susceptible of coming together and thus, of accumulation.



of key traditional spaces and spatial patterns. In this regard, we identify relevant “symbolic interpretations [and] signs of place” (Gottdiener, 1986a).

- Regarding dominant ‘symbolic interpretations’, the elite’s expectations of ‘progress’ appeared as totally incompatible with the traditional socio-spatial expressions. Nevertheless, traditional spatial elements such as the *Plaza de Bolívar* or the noble grid’s figure remained valid. Drawing on Neira’s (2004) review and Niño’s and Reina’s (2010) detailed survey, dominant symbolic interpretations of Bogotá’s cityscape involved persistent terms like ‘obstructing’, ‘incongruent’, ‘ugly’, ‘old’, ‘repulsive’, or ‘absurd’. However, every traditional space in the city centre did not trigger these ‘senses’ nor generate conflict in such a historical context characterised by the ‘reaffirmation of authority and the exercise of controlled socialization’. Such radical connotations did not apply to the whole spatial arrangement but specifically to central spaces where associative practices between different groups (mainly popular and middle social sectors) concentrated and appropriated urban and architectural elements within an increasing overcrowded urban context e.g. food markets, *plazoletas*, *tiendas* and *chicherías*.

Fig. 58. *Plaza de Mercado Central* in the 1940s. Aerial and street view



Source: *Fondo Obras Públicas de Cundinamarca* (CEAM)  
/ Colección Museo de Bogotá and Sady González

We want to draw attention to the numerous ‘discursive attacks’ against the remarkable central roofed market (*La Plaza de Mercado Central*) which was situated a couple of blocks away from the *Plaza de Bolívar* and right on the north-south trajectory

of the political-C.B.D project. This area of the market, surrounded by numerous religious referents such as chapels and convents, was persistently catalogued by politicians, the media, and influential city planners as a locus of ‘increasing traffic congestion’, ‘all manifestations of delinquency’, ‘total lack of hygiene’ and of having an ‘absurd location’.

Indeed, there were problems related to overcrowding and the lack of functional or infrastructural improvements in this area. However, it is crucial to point out that, according to alternative literature and chronicles of that period<sup>127</sup>, the area of the roofed market was also a significant meeting place and intense activity of diverse actors such as uprooted emigrant peasants, unemployed workers, students, ‘presumed’ artists and poets, ‘bohemian’ and ‘rebellious’ singers, former combatants of civil wars, and along with them, a varied sort of commercial activities that surrounded a ‘vivid’ food market. This description refers to a typical place which, according to Calvo Isaza, was generally accused by authorities of, “promoting sedition, crime and disorder” (quoted in Neira, 2004: 224). This connotation is corroborated with legislative agreements which categorised these sort of spaces as meeting places of “illicit activities of antisocial elements” (quoted in Niño & Reina, 2010: 83).

In this context, the urban planning agenda determined the fate of this space which only represented for the media and elitist groups a ‘village spectacle of dirt’ whose ‘urgent correction’ had to be achieved by ‘extirpation’ because, among other aspects, the market area should not fight against ‘the aspirations of a cult and progressive city’. Its demolition would allow the physical ‘straightness’ of the new centric avenue which was meant to facilitate the fast and easy flux of motorised traffic. Again, the supposed strict functionalist approach regarding the conception of the political-C.B.D can be relativized. During the initial construction works the ‘strict’ linear layout of the political-C.B.D was slightly ‘bended’ to avoid the demolition of a modern building that belonged to an aunt of the ‘president-urbanist’ Mariano Ospina Pérez<sup>128</sup>. Thus, the argument based on functionalism vanishes when concerning the interests of elite actors and the land uses and spatial signs which were supposed to frame the political-C.B.D.

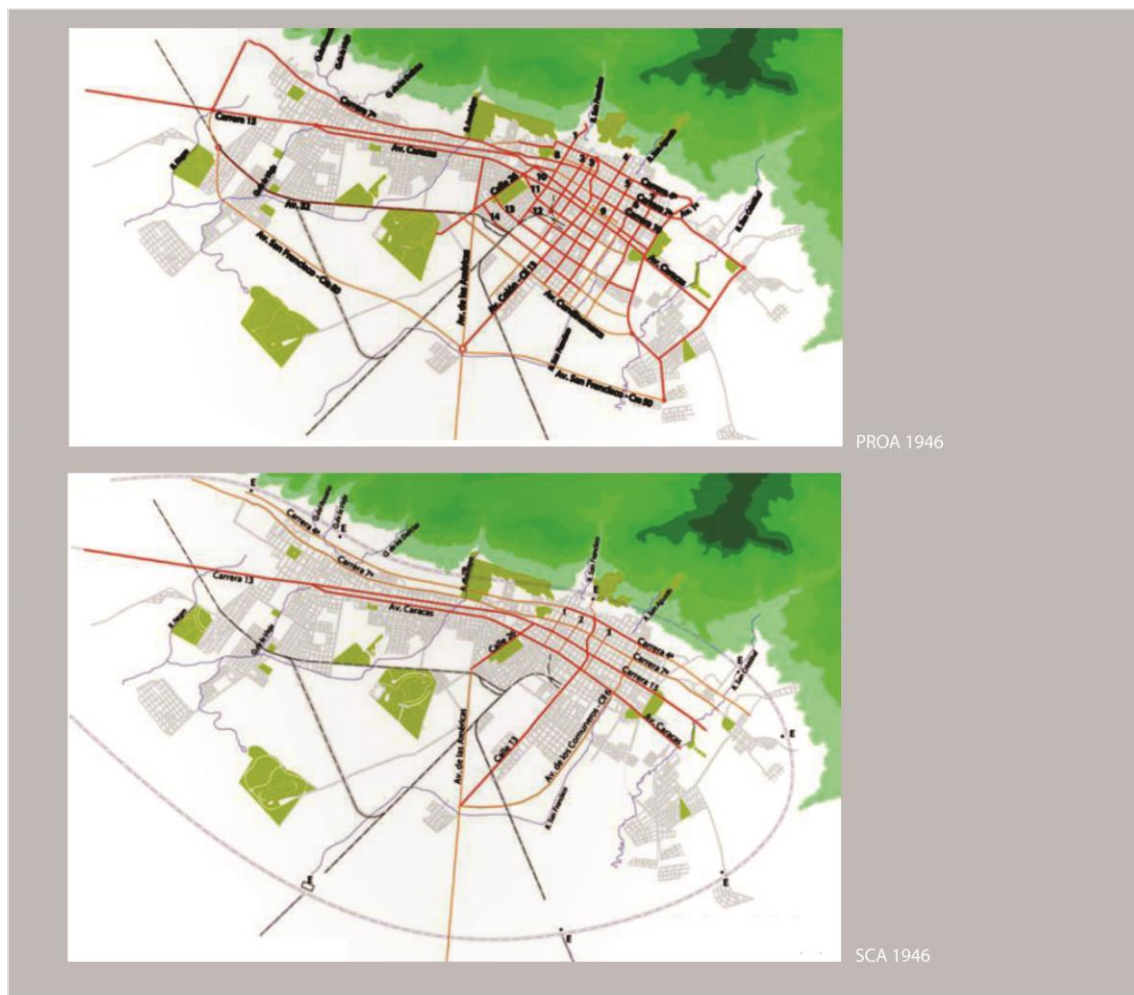
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<sup>127</sup> In particular the work of José Antonio Osorio Lizarazo appears as a contrasting and elucidating source of information about spatial practices during this critical period of Colombian history.

<sup>128</sup> See details about this eloquent episode in Niño and Reina (2010: 86ff).

- In reference to prevailing ‘signs of place’, it is important to identify the coexistence between a dogmatic functionalist approach and a strong reverence for the city’s main traditional spatial signs (principally the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the traditional grid’s figure) in several master plans. Subsequently, the master plans produced during the 1940s by local planners included the trajectory of the ‘central avenue’ (i.e. political-C.B.D’s axis) and they applied the modern principles of “through traffic and superblocs” (Carmona et al., 2003: 72ff) onto the noble orthogonal grid in order to ‘modernise’<sup>129</sup> it, yet avoiding the re-codification of the city’s main spatial signs and structure i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the grid.

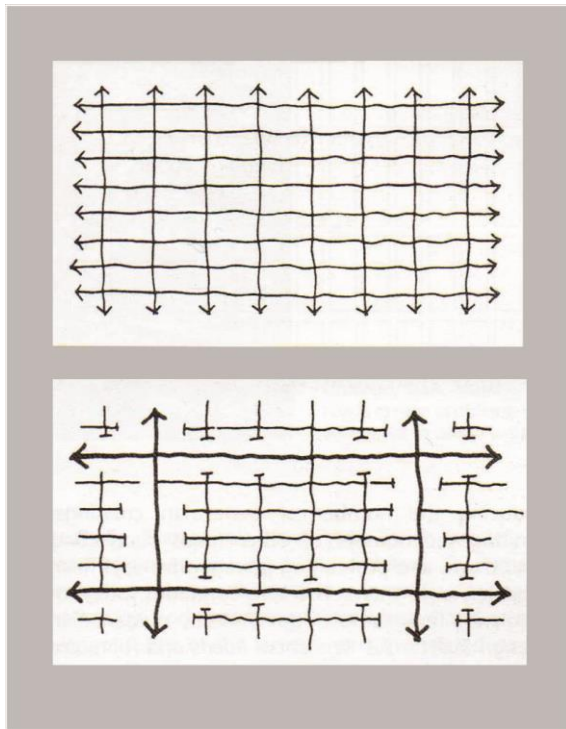
Fig. 59. Master Plans in the 1940s. *Plan Vial* of the Colombian Architects Society – SCA (1946) and Plan Vial Revista PROA (1946)



Source: Niño and Reina (2010: 44/46)

<sup>129</sup> A recurrent term in urban planning history and media articles about Bogotá during these decades was the aim, or almost the political obsession for ‘modernising the city centre’. In this sense, it is not necessary to mention here every authors or articles that underline this characteristic aspect of Bogotá’s city planning history.

Fig. 60. 'Through traffic and superblocks'



Source: Albert Pope quoted in Carmona et al. (2003: 73)

This approach to the city's orthogonal grid did involve economic and functional aspects: the possibility to maximize the use of space and real estate profits, and provide a 'rational and efficient' urban mobility. Nevertheless, there is a semiotic dimension that is normally overlooked in numerous analyses that address this historical period of Bogotá's urban planning. In this regard, we underline two significant facts concerning the highly influential master plans proposed by local planners:

First, the alternative spatial elements were deliberately rejected, such as *Bogotá Futuro*'s and Karl Brunner's diagonal avenues which were meant to remove the noble aura of Bogotá's city centre<sup>130</sup>; and second, none of the highly 'rational' and 'modern' propositions included modifications to the city's main traditional spatial sign (the *Plaza de Bolívar*). This lack of modifications appears as a very significant considering the radical modernising ambitions of influencing social groups and the professed 'obstructing', 'old' or 'ugly' character of Bogotá's traditional city centre area. Such contradictory relationship between the functional and semiotic dimensions of the above

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<sup>130</sup> The intention to remove the noble character of the grid was explicit in Karl Brunner's work. See details and key quotations of Brunner's memoirs and articles about urban planning in Latin American cities in Hofer (2003).

plans (signs of place) expressed, in aesthetic form, the socio-political forces that pursued the introduction of 'modern schemes' without jeopardizing *La Hacienda's* traditional structures. In this regard, we strongly question most studies of this historical period of Bogotá's urban planning history which isolate the dogmatic application of modern functionalist principles (such as the strict separation of modes of transportation) from any socio-historic and semiotic implications. Such studies tend to empty urban space and transform it into an abstract entity with no connection to social practices and historic meanings.

In this context, we identify a further contradictory characteristic in these master plans that reveals the conflicting relationship between the semiotic and functional dimensions of the urban centrality of the city. The configuration of the whole spatial arrangement proposed by the SCA and the *Revista Proa* reproduced the emerging 'topographical de-centralization' of the city centre. This aspect refers to the 'southern location' of the centre that was confirmed through these plans which involved a prevalent connection of upper class neighbourhoods to the centre and limited infrastructure and availability of land for the southern periphery, already characterised by popular groups. None of the proposed plans in the 1940s envisioned alternative concentric schemes which could have encouraged, on the one hand, a stronger representational potential of the city centre, and on the other hand, a more socially and physically balanced access to services and to the institutions of the state. Consequently, it is very significant that even in the context of accepting and promoting the socio-spatial polarization of the territory, the southern *barrios obreros* were unevenly connected within the master plans. Note the number of main roads and the lack of continuity of the layout towards south in the above plans.

### **5.2.3. The Spatial Unfolding of the Crisis**

The spatial unfolding of the crisis refers to a time period that developed from the 1940s to the 1970s in which the urban centrality of Bogotá was transformed into a 'fragmented' entity. This is a phase of strong social and spatial contradictions related to *La Hacienda's* effort to remain as dominant associative model after the socio-spatial concessions that were granted in the 1930s during the so-called *Revolución en Marcha*.

Drawing on Guillén (1979), the social contradictions developed within the emergence of alternative modes of association which were inspired in the image of the

“unions and associations” - *asociaciones y gremios* (Guillén, 1979: 568) founded during the *Revolución en Marcha* and the subsequent ‘pause’ of such revolution at the end of the 1930s and beginnings of the 1940s<sup>131</sup>. As a result, there was a strong collective tension for participation in decision-making and symbolic (and spatial) recognition. This tension evolved into intense violence (200,000 deaths in 19 years) and the organisation of armed groups.

In this regard, there is a break in Colombia’s social history known as the *Bogotazo*<sup>132</sup>. The *Bogotazo* was a massive riot that followed the assassination of the Liberal Political leader and presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. The riot was particularly intense in Bogotá’s city centre leaving a lot of deaths and debris. Guillén (1979) interpreted this phenomenon as the highest threat to the existence of *La Hacienda*’s oligarchical order. According to the author, the *Bogotazo* was also a ‘gap’ in which the new urban anonym masses did not obey the elite’s commands. Such a gap terrified the political and economic groups in power which decided to re-use ‘old weapons’ such as the establishment of a bipartisan government (or national union), and at the same time, the promotion of rural-political violence.

Fig. 61. The *Bogotazo*, 1948 (*La Catedral / Carrera Séptima*)



Source: *Radio Santa Fe*

<sup>131</sup> These alternative modes of association ranged from spontaneous or induced organisms of community action like the *Movimiento de Golconda* to political movements such as the ANAPO (*Alianza Nacional Popular*) as well as worker and peasants unions promoted by the church like the UTC (*Unión de Trabajadores Colombianos*) or FANAL (*Federación Agraria Nacional*) which initially had the objective of counteracting the communist “infiltration” and influence in the working classes. See Guillén (1979: 557ff).

<sup>132</sup> From “Bogotá” and the -azo suffix of violent augmentation.

Such response to the momentary social (and particularly urban) insurrection had the objective of preventing the further weakening of poly-classist vertical loyalties in the regions where *La Hacienda* traditionally provided the solid electoral base that sustained and legitimated the privileging politics of the ISI and the related modernisation model. In this context, whilst conservatives (in power) used the official mechanisms of repression assisted by belligerent peons, liberal leaders overtly and covertly supported the conformation of armed groups to terrorize conservative peasants and fight police and military forces. This situation provided bargaining power to the elite's liberal faction but led to the formation of increasingly independent groups detached from traditional kinship structures and the interests of *hacendados* and national political leaders (*doctores*), in other words, new forms of association for self-government that became leftist 'guerrillas'. According to Guillén's (1979) analysis, this context proved the obsolescence of traditional socio-political strategies and led to the introduction of new ones: first, the instalment of the dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953) or 'the saviour of the fatherland' and his subsequent deposing (1957) which opened the path for a constitutional reform known as *El Frente Nacional* (1958-1974) which formalized the historical tendency that consisted in the sharing of power, the proscription of divergent political forces and the converge of the political elite in regard to the general socio-economic model.

The general outcome of this strong tension was the full development of the privileging politics of the ISI and the conflictive application of spatial strategies, especially, those strategies which we have been discussing in previous chapters. In this sense, social contradictions presupposed spatial contradictions which, within our research, refer to the conflictive application of the strategies needed 'to modernise and confirm' Bogotá's city centre as the country's main core of power within a period of brutal violence. We particularly draw attention to the strategies of the (1) creation of the political-C.B.D, (2) the maintenance of *La Hacienda*'s main spatial signs and (3) the introduction of new 'fordist principles of spatial specialisation'.

In the following, we will address the different relationships between these three aspects and identify a set of spatial phenomena that strongly impacted the 'representative condition' of the city and its physical expansion. In this regard, our aim is to establish the main features of the 'spatial unfolding of the crisis' which appear



fundamental for the subsequent decoding of the current urban centrality configuration of the city.

*Strong opposition of secular and sacral spatial signs: the juxtaposition of the political-C.B.D and La Hacienda's main spatial sign*

The first relationship to be addressed involves a strong socio-cultural content. The highly popular, lively and potentially insurrectionary *Plazas de Mercado* e.g. the *Plaza Central de Mercado* or the *Plaza de Las Nieves* rapidly succumbed to the political will of maintaining the linearity of the political-C.B.D by means of selective and extensive demolition. Whilst the population of the *plazas de mercado* was literally removed and expelled to peripheral open spaces (particularly to the square *La Plaza España*), the political promises of building modern markets in the city's periphery remained only as plans.

Fig. 62. Demolition process of the roofed market area (1954)



Source: *El Tiempo*

However a small traditional church, the *Iglesia de Santa Inés*, located nearby the *Plaza Central de Mercado* (i.e. the roofed market shown above) remained standing against the demolition project which was being conducted in order to build the central section of the political-C.B.D. This delay in the demolition and construction work occurred in spite of the aggressive management of the city's administration desire to build the urban project, and in spite of the support of a sector of the elite and of the installed dictatorship (1953-1958) (which turned out to be highly efficient in regard to the execution of modern infrastructural interventions). The situation concerning the *Iglesia de Santa Inés* postponed and complicated the demolition of the existent city



blocks and the construction work of the political-C.B.D in the vicinities of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. Therefore, the construction of the planned mixed-use modern buildings in close proximity to the prime and tightly comprised signifiers of ‘political power and religiosity/divinity’ (which are particularly significant in the historical reproduction of *La Hacienda*’s order) was affected.

Fig. 63. *Iglesia de Santa Inés* and delayed demolition works (1956)



Source: *El Tiempo*

By contrast, the northern section of the political-C.B.D project quickly hosted the main offices of banks, insurance companies, etc. and particularly the nascent firms and the associations connected to *La Hacienda*’s politics of privilege. Whilst intense debate regarding the demolition of the *Iglesia de Santa Inés* was taking place between the city administration and religious and civic institutions dominated by another sector of the elite<sup>133</sup>, more ‘efficient’ processes of expropriation, demolition and erection of new and modern constructions took place along the northern section of the political-C.B.D. Considering Niño’s and Reina’s (2010) historical records, 1.2 km of dense urban tissue were demolished in between 1948 and 1952 along the northern section of the planned political-C.B.D, and 19 notable buildings were built in this sector between 1951 and 1974. Particularly, the buildings that hosted the *asociaciones* and *gremios* connected to the ISI and the related, banks, credit institutions, insurance companies and

<sup>133</sup> Particularly, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (owner of the *Iglesia de Santa Inés*), notorious journalists of printed media such as Emilia Pardo Umaña or Javier Arango Ferrer, and the highly traditional association ‘Improvements and Ornament Society of Bogotá’ or *Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato de Bogotá*. This term in Spanish refers to the current name of the association *Sociedad de Embellecimiento de Bogotá* founded in 1917 that was mentioned above.

a few exclusive residential buildings configured a new city-centre type, and with it, a new ‘conceived spatiality of power’ within Bogotá’s densest area.

Fig. 64. Northern section political-C.B.D (1963)



Source: Daniel Rodríguez - Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural / Colección Museo de Bogotá

This ‘spatiality of power’ was particularly configured through the completion of the buildings of the ACPO - *Acción Cultural Popular* -1958 (association for the integral Christian education of the people), *Caja de Crédito Agrario, Industrial y Minero*-1956 (Credit bank for agriculture, industry and Mining), CAMACOL - *Cámara Colombiana de la Construcción*-1966 (Colombian chamber of construction), *Edificio Colseguros*-1974 (insurance and credit), *Edificio Seguros Bolívar*-1956 (insurance), *Edificio Lonja de Propiedad Raíz*-1968 (Real Estate association), *Edificio Sociedad de Agricultores*-1951 (agricultural society) and *Edificio Banco de Bogotá*-1959 (Banking) among others. Some of these buildings hosted foreign industries and embassies, for example the offices of Texaco and Icollantas as well as the U.S. embassy were located in the *Edificio Seguros Bolívar*.

The *Iglesia de Santa Inés* was finally demolished while intense discussions were taking place. These were discussions about the ‘value’ of traditional spaces and architectural objects and the semiotic and functional prevalence of the political-C.B.D project. According to the city planning council the conservation of the *Iglesia de Santa Inés* would alter the ‘linearity’ of the project and would notably increase costs. Yet, a

strong argument was that the conservation of this building would deeply affect the project's 'magnificence and effectiveness'<sup>134</sup>. Demolitions took place but the image of the envisioned political-C.B.D along the central and southern sections of the project did not materialize. Along these two sections the only element that remained of the political-C.B.D project was its central and structuring axial avenue. There were no representative buildings framing the linear space which transformed the central and southern sections of the project into a soulless motorway. This is a linear functional space that lacked the intended semiotic value, but that made possible the accessibility of popular sectors which inhabited Bogotá's southern peripheries to the city centre (see figures below).

Fig. 65. Demolition of *Iglesia de Santa Inés* (1956)



Source: *El Tiempo*

Fig. 66. Condition of the central and southern sections of the project in 1958



Source: Daniel Rodríguez - Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural / Colección Museo de Bogotá

<sup>134</sup> See quotations of the city planning council minutes and printed media interviews to influential members of this organism in Niño and Reina (2010: 101ff).

From our perspective, the struggle to build the central section of the political-C.B.D (where significant referents of the colonial period were located in proximity to the *Plaza de Bolívar*) exemplifies the dialectic of urban centrality i.e. the scarcity of space within a given socio-cultural conjuncture. We refer to a contradictory scenario characterised by a modernisation of a small elite and the simultaneous maintenance of pre-modern structures and spatial signs connected to its hegemonic power. The outcome was the reproduction and reinforcement of the juxtaposition of the ‘political-religious core’ and the ‘economic core’ (inherited from the first years of the *Revolución in Marcha*) but under different socio-political coordinates i.e. ‘the pause’ in the promotion of social change. The key spatial sign within these coordinates was an instrument of enhancing and regaining Bogotá’s iconic character of ‘authority’, an authority which had been lost during the few years of social concessions (i.e. the 1930s). This sign, the political-C.B.D, was not susceptible to the merge nor to the overlapping traditional spatial textures. In other words, the main and traditional spatial sign of *La Hacienda* (the *Plaza de Bolívar* and its immediate surroundings) and the emerging representational space of *La Hacienda*’s modernising efforts (the political-C.B.D) were spatially irreconcilable.

*Official confirmation of uneven spatial conditions: the creation of a functional and symbolic polarity of Bogotá’s urban centrality via the political-C.B.D’s development*

The conception and development of the political-C.B.D involved the reproduction of Bogotá’s socio-spatial polarization. In this regard, it is possible to identify a dominant feature of the project which consisted in the introduction of a semiotic and functional polarity within Bogotá’s city centre’s area. Highly influential actors envisioned the political-C.B.D project as having a north pole and a south pole. Whilst the northern end of the C.B.D project would be marked by an international hotel - ‘the best in Colombia’ -, the southern end would be defined by a modern hospital which would provide free medical services ‘for the poor of the south’<sup>135</sup>.

The selection of the location for the hotel was highly influenced by the Pan American Airline<sup>136</sup> which identified the green northern area of the political-C.B.D project as ‘strategic’, which was known as *San Diego*. *San Diego* (the former northern

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<sup>135</sup> See Niño’s and Reina’s (2010) quotations of the *El Tiempo* newspaper regarding the architectural projects of the city administration in July 1948.

<sup>136</sup> See Fontana’s (2011: 184) notations about the actors involved in the development of the hotel’s project.

edge of the colonial city) was characterised by the presence of two renowned parks (the *Parque Centenario* and the *Parque de la Independencia*), the chapel of *San Diego*, the national library, *La Plaza de Toros* (bullring) and the new building of the national museum<sup>137</sup>. In the 1950s this North American airline decided to create a luxurious hotel chain (the Intercontinental) in Latin America to host their passengers accordingly. In this regard it is worth being reminded of the fact that the U.S.A was a key partner of the imposed industrialisation process of the ISI and therefore a fundamental actor within Colombian elite's socio-political strategies. In this context, the suggested location for the hotel appears highly convenient for internal and external social groups considering that the selected area already functioned as the entrance point to the city centre from the northern surroundings where neighbourhoods of the upper classes i.e. *barrios residenciales* were increasingly expanding. In this regard, it is no surprise that the hotel (finally named as *Hotel Tequendama* and built between 1950 and 1953) had as much success<sup>138</sup> as the advanced stage of the ISI in Colombia (i.e. from the 1950s to the 1970s). As such, we describe the hotel as a strong signifier of the modernised elitist model and dependant mode of production (whose main spatial sign was the political-C.B.D).

This functional and semiotic hierarchy of the hotel (in relation to the hospital) was evident also in relation to functional and contextual conditions. Whilst the efficient demolition works of the northern section of the political-C.B.D were taking place, the accessibility conditions to the hotel's area (i.e. the northern end of the political-C.B.D) from the northern periphery were quickly improved. By contrast, complementary infrastructural interventions to improve the accessibility to the modern hospital 'for the poor of the south' were not prioritised as much as the northern end of the political-C.B.D. However, the building was quickly constructed in proximity to the most popular neighbourhoods and news about the construction of the hospital (1948-1952) was widely spread by traditional printed media (owned by the political class). This fact

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<sup>137</sup> The new building for the national museum was the former city's prison. The change of function was highly promoted by powerful politicians such as the already mentioned Laureano Gómez who intervened in several urban issues during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both buildings i.e. the national library and the prison originally had a peripheral location in regard to Bogotá's city centre. Yet, within the context of the expansion of the so called *barrios residenciales* towards north and of the planning and construction of the political-C.B.D, the area where these buildings were located acquired a new representational value.

<sup>138</sup> We refer to success in terms of the general aim of creating an industrial elite and economic monopolies. It is worth being reminded of the comparative low growth of the secondary sector in Colombia during the last years of the ISI and the creation of few urban jobs due to –among other aspects – the little investments of the private sector.

appeared as a method to neutralize the tension during the intense rural violence and potential urban uprising.

Fig. 67. Improved accessibility conditions to the envisioned *Hotel Tequendama* (1949)



Source: *El Espectador*

In sum, the general conception of the political-C.B.D enforced existent polarization tendencies via the spatial opposition of two urban referents i.e. the hotel for the elite and its partners and the hospital for the (increasingly conscious) popular sectors. The location of the international hotel (highly functional for the elite's socio-economic ambitions) within an emerging 'cultural spot' with particular environmental qualities contrasted deeply to the southern end of the political-C.B.D project where the old city hospital was located and the infrastructural works for the political-C.B.D project got stuck. Such polarization had deep roots. On the one hand, southern traditional neighbourhoods were increasingly inhabited by excluded and repressed population (e.g. craftsmen); and on the other hand, the southern periphery had been principally produced via the 'localization' or 'move' of popular sectors to distant and physically fragmented *barrios obreros*.

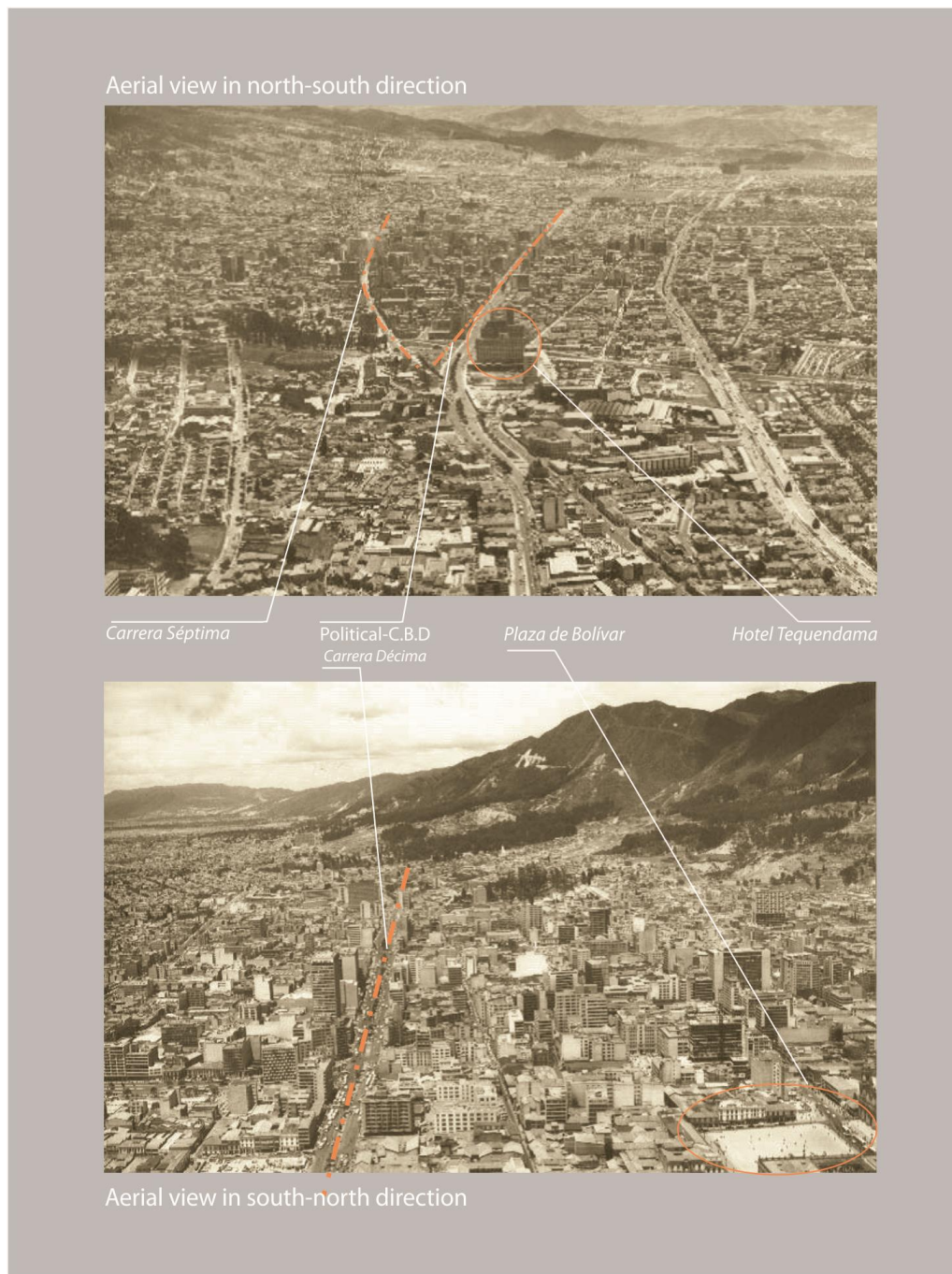
*The politics of an elitist citybildung: underpinning the spatial juxtaposition of the spaces of 'exchange' and of 'political power and religiosity'*

The planned modernisation of the noble grid did not include incentives to distribute concentrically the construction activities or the location of services. In contrast, the 'through traffic and superblocks' principle used to 'modernise' the noble spatiality of Bogotá was combined with a particular sort of *citybildung*. This *citybildung* involved, on the one hand, former tendencies which entailed the concentration of the tertiary sector within the northern area of the original city centre; and on the other hand,



the spatial linearity defined by the political-C.B.D. and the widening of the *Carrera Séptima* i.e. former *Camino Viejo* in times of *La Encomienda*. This linear spatial pattern developed from the 1940s to the 1970s despite of the creation of ‘superblocks’ within the whole city centre area. This means that the southern and western borders of the traditional city included transformations of former colonial streets into wider avenues and therefore also an expected valorisation of plots, residences, etc.

Fig. 68. Juxtaposition and linear densification of exchange processes (1960s)



Source: Own elaboration based on the aerial photographs of Saúl Ordúz / *Colección Museo de Bogotá*

This particular trend responds to several aspects. To begin with, it appears logical that under capitalist conditions (e.g. commoditisation of land and labour, etc.) the location of exchange processes (i.e. the money, finance and labour market) concentrates spatially in order to improve transactional performance and gain semiotic dominance in relation to the rest of the spatial arrangement. In this regard, we identify as a reasonable spatial trend the growth of the tertiary sector in proximity to previous significant arrangements and spatial elements such as earlier banks and other related institutions.

However, the remarkable concentration of services, offices, etc. in the northern area of the city centre (i.e. the blocks next to the *Plaza de Bolívar*) and along the northern sections of the political-C.B.D (i.e. the *Carrera Décima*) and the *Carrera Séptima* evolved in a context in which, on the one hand, the development of the central and southern sections of the political-C.B.D. had less priority for dominant groups<sup>139</sup> and faced the representational contradictions mentioned above<sup>140</sup>; and on the other hand, there were no other strong political initiative to provide particular spatial conditions in the eastern or southern areas of the city centre for upper, middle or popular sector's economic activities<sup>141</sup>.

This sort of spatial development involved highly profitable real-estate activities of upper social groups which took advantage of their ownership of land in the city centre as well as of urban regulations and the political disregard of certain urban laws. In this regard, rich and highly influential families sold many buildings as well as properties affected by the riot of 1948 (especially along the *Carrera Séptima*) to entrepreneurs of the nascent (and monopolist) construction sector who built in between the 1940s and 1960s numerous buildings from five to twelve stories that hosted offices in the upper floors and commerce in the lower levels.

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<sup>139</sup> In this regard, it is worth reminding the great concern to achieve optimal accessibility to the city centre from northern areas (i.e. the areas where the *barrios residenciales* - the upper classes residential areas were located) through the C.B.D project.

<sup>140</sup> See the conjunction around the demolition of the *Iglesia de Santa Inés*.

<sup>141</sup> As mentioned above, the prevailing tendency within the context of controlled socialization was the use of the media and the institutions of the State to expel popular and alternative social groups and destroy them from meeting and using representational spaces such as the *Plazas de Mercado* located in the city centre.



Fig. 69. Office buildings at the *Carrera Séptima* in the 1960s



Source: Daniel Rodríguez / *Colección Museo de Bogotá*

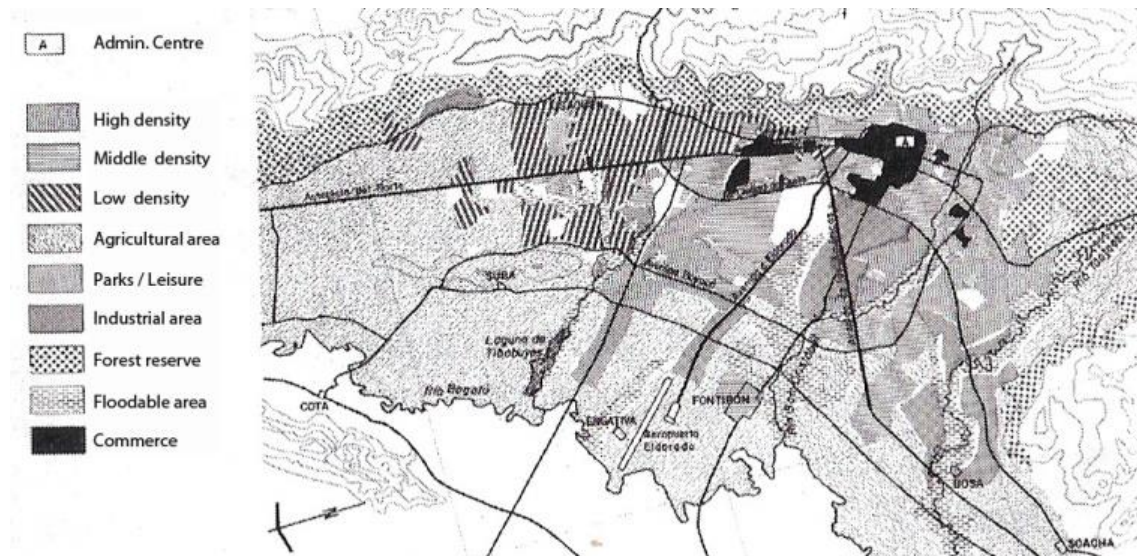
This occurred within a context in which the horizontal property law was not applied<sup>142</sup>. In addition, urban policies delineated by key actors of the elite portrayed Bogotá as an arrangement composed primarily by ‘commercial/institutional cores’ (Bogotá’s city centre and Chapinero’s core) surrounded by an industrial and socially segregated ‘residential periphery’. This was a spatial zoning that legitimised and condemned the centre as a space dedicated strictly for services, commerce, etc., with no priority for residential purposes. In fact, the issue of propelling and legitimating residential and social segregation was as relevant as the problem of improving accessibility conditions to the city centre from the northern (upper class) *barrios residenciales*. In 1940 the proposal to confirm and propel the already existing residential segregation was led by the mayor Germán Zea and presented to the economic and political elite in the Jockey Club. According to Amato (1970b: 406), this event laid the foundation for the urban regulations of 1944 (i.e. the same year in which

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<sup>142</sup> The horizontal property law was enacted in 1948 but it was only applied until 1963.

the political-C.B.D was proposed) which officially divided the city's periphery according to social groups and economic strata<sup>143</sup>.

Fig. 70. Bogotá's official master plan (1960)



Source: *Estudio Alternativas*. Legend translated by the author

Thus, whilst a minority was enjoying of high rents through the leasing of offices and commercial spaces in strategic points, the city centre's northern areas significantly lost residents<sup>144</sup>. This tendency starts to be connoted as 'negative' in the 1960s and therefore the city administration together with public financial institutions ran a sort of 'housing strategy' which consisted in placing exclusive mixed use towers (residential and commercial) at one of the new avenues (*La Avenida 19*) that crossed the city centre's northern area in east-west direction.

At the end, the new twenty-storey towers were not attractive to the upper class (which increasingly inhabited the growing *barrios residenciales* in the north) and framed only a short section of the avenue leaving numerous vacant lots and displaced popular sectors from convenient central areas of the city. Nevertheless, this public

<sup>143</sup> The city's master plan of 1960 includes this spatial distribution (see fig. 63) and encourages a spatial pattern that, if observed from a strict functional perspective (see Rincón's 2006: 105ff analysis), appears as highly contradictory i.e. whilst the greenest residential areas of lowest densities have the best infrastructure (north-east), the residential areas with poorest urban services (south-west) are allowed to increase densities and introduce mixed uses such as housing and mechanical workshops (a typical informal economic activity developed by popular sectors). However, this configuration does make sense and refers to survival strategies of an oligarchical socio-spatial order. This idea will be developed according to urban centrality further bellow.

<sup>144</sup> For more information about policy and real-estate of this period (1940s to 1960s) see Rodríguez et al. (2008) and Rincón (2006: 87ff).

intervention strongly influenced land prices and reinforced the focalization of private investments within the northern sector of the city centre leaving the southern, eastern and western ends out of the picture.

Fig. 71. Mixed use towers within the city centre's northern area (1960s)



Source: *Revista Camacol*

The creation of spatial signifiers of ‘knowledge’ and ‘information/communication’ took place in the city centre (such as the central library *Luis Ángel Arango* or some buildings of different universities) but also followed the spatial trend of concentration in the city’s northern quarters. It is important to note that this occurs within the general context characterised by rejection of the measures taken in the period of the so-called *Revolución en Marcha* (such as generalization of public education) and of ‘restoration of authority’ in which the state handed back education rights to the church and private actors were allowed to found universities that were mostly located within the north-east and north-west quarters of the city centre (e.g. the *Universidad de los Andes*, *Universidad La Gran Colombia*, *Fundación Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano*, the INCCA, etc.) whilst the public National University remained in its peripheral and isolated campus<sup>145</sup>. The particular increment of theatres and

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<sup>145</sup> This condition led to the conflicting co-existence of a big private sector of education and of public institutions (mostly represented by the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*) in charge of the promotion of upward social mobility through high rank education.

cinemas followed the same tendency and also located in the vicinities of Chapinero's core and in between Chapinero and the northern end of Bogotá's city centre (i.e. the area of *San Diego*).

In sum, there were deep representational problems of *La Hacienda* during the consolidation of the ISI. In addition, the combination of dominant socio-spatial and political strategies defined an elitist *citybildung*. In this context, the spatial juxtaposition of the comprised signifiers of 'political power and religiosity' (i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar* area) and of spatial referents of 'exchange' (i.e. the core of the crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez/Carrera Séptima* and the political-C.B.D) was propelled. As a result we highlight the boosting of the historical linear-concentric pattern and structure of the city which will be addressed in detail in what follows.

#### **5.2.4. The final shifting of Bogotá's urban centrality: The opposition of modern and noble spatial signs as strategy and contradiction of *La Hacienda*'s reproduction in times of the ISI**

The modernisation plans of the Colombian elite were aimed at 'guiding' the whole population, in order 'to integrate' the nation into the 'civilised world'. This agenda included opening external consults regarding urban issues, in particular, the spatial planning of the nation's capital. This context enabled the intervention of Le Corbusier, J.L. Sert and P.L. Wiener who were as welcome as the foreign investments and financing of the privileging industrialisation process.

These international architects and urban planners were asked to develop one of the most ambitious projects in Latin America. In the process, these architects included some of the on-going local projects as well as historical spatial elements and arrangements in their plans; they also suggested a thorough urban compaction and also the re-codification of Bogotá's city centre. This situation presupposed the acceptance of existing spatial patterns (mainly the city's spatial linearity) but also intense conflicts around the physical expansion of the city and the transformation of the society's main spatial signs.

With regard to urban centrality, these foreign prestigious planners validated the linear connection of the central spaces of the *Plaza de Bolívar*, the *Parque Santander* (former place of the *Humilladero/Plaza de la Yerba*) and the emerging cultural spot at the north edge of the city centre i.e. the area of *San Diego*. According to the planners'

perspective, this linear set of sub-centres had the potential to constitute a whole *Centro Cívico*. The *Centro Cívico* appears as a strategy that, on the one hand, was connected to the 8<sup>th</sup> CIAM congress' discussion about the 'the fifth urban function'. This is the 'missed function' of the 'Charter of Athens' that is concerned with the appraisal of history and the symbolic representation of societies. And on the other hand, the strategy *Centro Cívico* was related to J.L. Sert's professional experience in Latin America<sup>146</sup>.

These international architects envisioned a sequence of interconnected spaces whose main function would be maintained. Thus, whilst the area of the *Plaza de Bolívar* was projected as a political and religious node, the areas of the *Parque Santander* and *San Diego* were defined as nodes of 'commerce and business', and 'culture, leisure and hotel activities', respectively. This spatial reading fitted both, dominant spatial tendencies (e.g. the prevalent linear development of central spaces towards north) as well as the ambitions of influential local actors, particularly, the elite's intention to create an exclusive north end of the political-C.B.D i.e. the area of the *Hotel Tequendama*. This convergence in terms of functions and social character of the envisioned spaces can be identified in the descriptions of the city and the urban schemes proposed. Yet, it is worth noting that the political-C.B.D (already under construction) did not have much semiotic hierarchy within the international planners' conception. For example, the political-C.B.D is reduced to a functional connection or motorway in Le Corbusier's plan.

However, Sert's and Wiener's master plan or *Plan Regulador* of 1953 (based on Le Corbusier's *Plan Piloto* adopted by the city council in 1951) included an intervention that entailed a strong alteration of the city's main spatial sign. We refer to a re-codification of the *Plaza de Bolívar* through morphological and functional modifications that would have affected the very semiotic structure of the *Plaza*. Le Corbusier's, Wiener's and Sert's plans suggested the transformation of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s basic configuration into a larger space with an 'L' shape (see figure below). This redefinition would not have only involved a physical extension of the traditional locus of power, but also the location of new institutions at the new square, institutions historically repressed and banned that had been momentarily supported in the 1930s

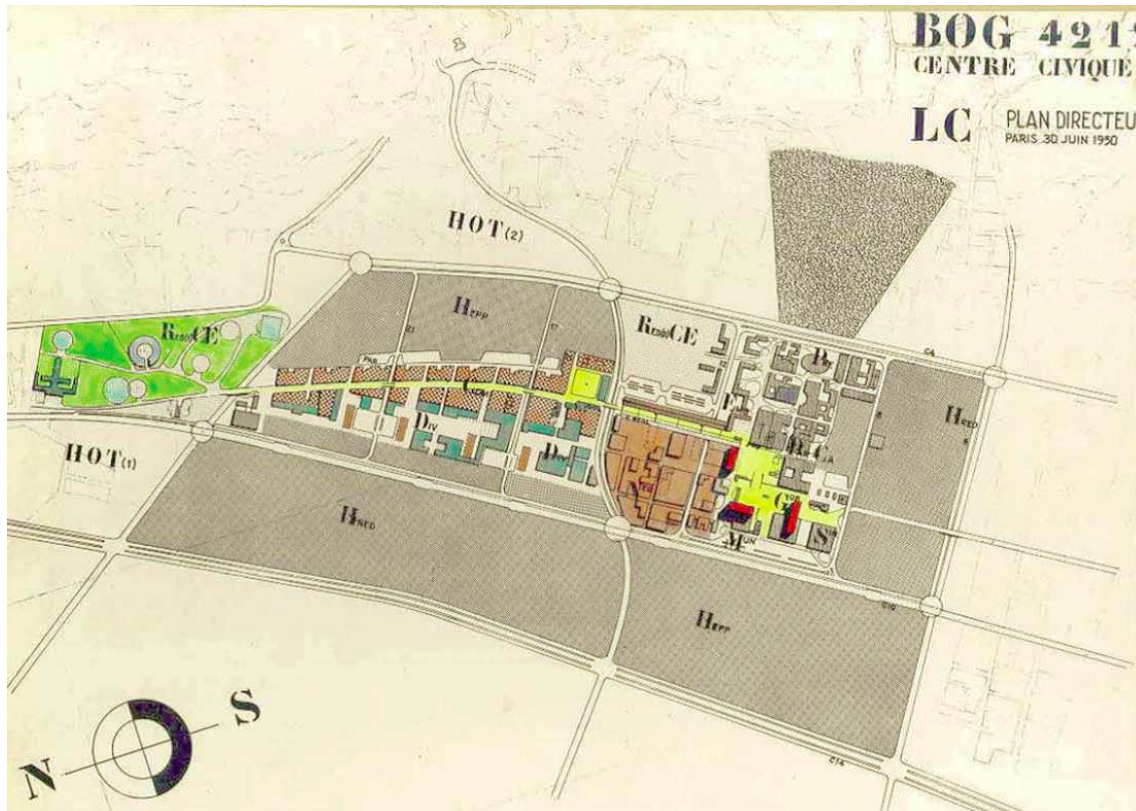
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<sup>146</sup> See details about the 8<sup>th</sup> CIAM congress and its relation to Latin America's urban development in Fontana (2011: 54ff) and Hernández (2004: 85ff/131ff).



during the *Revolución en Marcha*; for example, the *unions*, whose main building was projected at the longer western edge of the planned square (see fig. 73 below).

Fig. 72. Linear arrangement of sub-centres proposed within the *Plan Piloto* (Le Corbusier 1950)



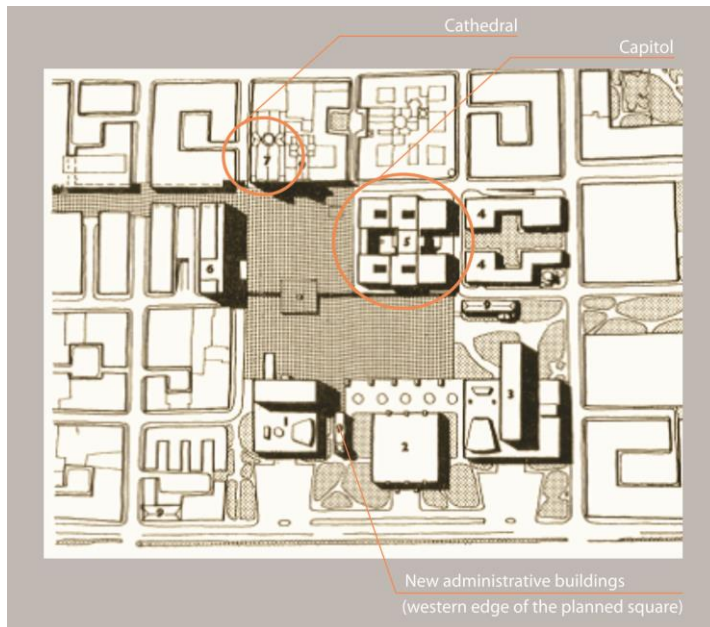
Source: Colección Museo de Bogotá

The square shape of the *plaza* can be defined as ‘the ground’ (of the *Plaza de Bolívar* i.e. the spatial sign). In other words, this shape is an essential iconic characteristic of the ‘noble’ order of society and the unquestionable character of its institutions<sup>147</sup>. The foreign planners’ proposal redefined this ‘ground’, and created a representation of space that denoted a transformation of the society’s power structure. This is a traditional structure that was being toughly defended by the elites during those years. Our ‘abductive look’ at Le Corbusier’s, Sert’s and Wiener’s proposals for the *Plaza de Bolívar* is substantiated with these architects’ symbolic interpretations of cities and spatial planning practices e.g. the promotion of *Centros Cívicos* in those years. For

<sup>147</sup> See the spatial decoding and historical approach to the *Plaza Mayor* or *Plaza de Armas* in chapters 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3.

Sert, these kind of centres were intended to act as nodes of deep civic relationships and communicate a great ‘libertarian value’ in favour of the ‘world democracies’<sup>148</sup>.

Fig. 73. Spatial re-coding of the *Plaza de Bolívar* area. Wiener and Sert (1953)



Source: Own elaboration based on *Colección Museo de Bogotá*

The schemes of the project reveal both: the presence of re-signifying elements as well as spatial features that re-produce historical meanings. For example, the new ‘L’ shape would have provided a much more predominant location and a visual dominance to the Capitol i.e. the main signifier of secular/civic authority and ‘democracy’. The Capitol appears placed in the vertex of the gap with the ‘L’ shape and thus this public building would have become an observable element from any point within the enlarged square. This transformation would have transgressed the conceived hierarchical prevalence of the cathedral and therefore the ‘sacral’ or religious conception of the republic that materialised through the subordinated design and location of the Capitol in the southern edge of the traditional square<sup>149</sup>. Additionally, the verticality of the cathedral, denoting in iconic manner ‘the idea of god’, becomes seriously counteracted with the presence of the new high administrative buildings planned at the northern and western edges of the new *Plaza de Bolívar*. Conversely, the foreign city planners did not question the spatial concentration of all (sacral and secular) society’s institutions within

<sup>148</sup> See Hernández’s (2004: 85ff) quotations of Le Corbusier’s and Sert’s declarations and discourses.

<sup>149</sup> See the semiotic analysis of the *Plaza de Bolívar* in chapter 5.1.3.

a single space. This concentration of power is a grounding feature of the typical representational space of the colonial homogenizing project which was not threatened within the idea of the *Centro Cívico*.

Consequently, we posit that the suggested transformations pointed towards the construction of a new spatial sign that, in spite of preserving key historical referents and spatial features, entailed a shift of meaning that challenged the existing representation of power within the most intense period of struggle to maintain essential socio-political elements of *La Hacienda*<sup>150</sup>. From this perspective, it is possible to explain why the overall plan (with its strong intervention in the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area) was highly questioned by diverse influential actors and associations (e.g. the SCA, the PROA journal), particularly the strong critique of those actors who initially promoted - in an almost fanatic manner - the intervention of Le Corbusier and his colleagues in Bogotá's spatial modernisation. With regard to the overall plan, it was seen as "not fixed to reality" (Castillo Daza, 2003: 57) and "inappropriate" (Hernández, 2004: 149) with numerous problems that could be resolved by local planners. However, the proposal of developing a strong governmental core in the very city centre was supported by the media, politicians and local experts, but the re-coding of the *Plaza de Bolívar* associated to this proposal was doubted.

From our perspective this prevention towards the re-coding of the *Plaza* is directly linked to the defence of *La Hacienda*'s order. Drawing on the sources gathered by Niño (1991) and Niño and Reina (2010), the critiques and symbolic interpretations of numerous (collective and individual) actors related directly the 'conservation of tradition' to 'the respect of the existing city centre'. The installed military dictatorship seemed to share this link between 'tradition' and 'centre' as well as the idea of the spatial concentration of the institutions of the state. However, the ruling elite also accepted the need of 'modernity'. In this regard, an actor in charge of public works in the city proclaimed: "...we love the past and we respect with all the strength of our soul, but we cannot live as they did in the past"<sup>151</sup>. Thus, the installed dictatorship in charge of the protection of the terrified elite affected by the riot of 1948 (in which the

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<sup>150</sup> In this sense, we introduce the analysis of this event of the city's urban planning history from a structural interpretation of meaning in order to avoid morally driven evaluations such as Niño's (1991: 265f) which acknowledges the intended transformation of the *Plaza de Bolívar* as a simplistic view of modernism that would have 'ruined' the square.

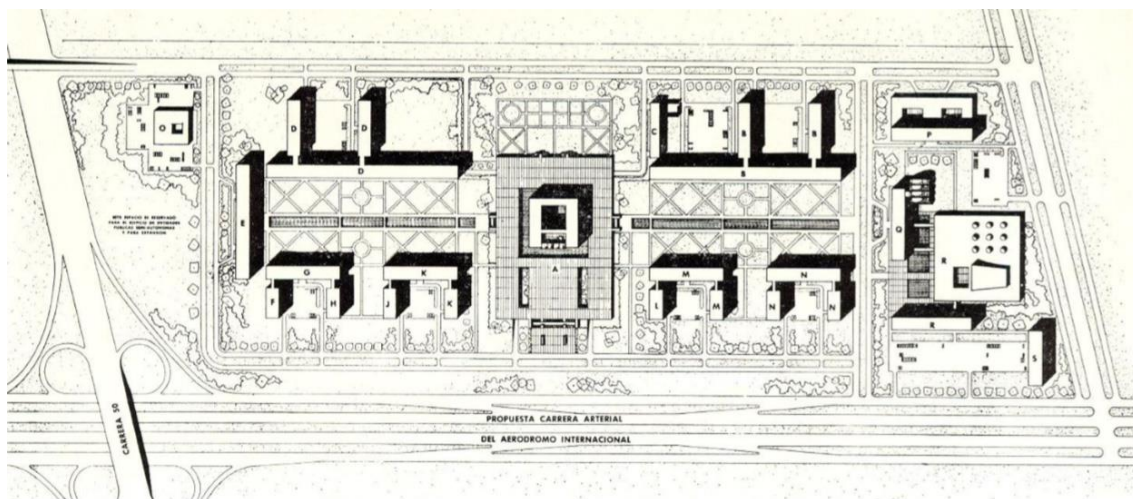
<sup>151</sup> Quoted in García (2007)



conservative president Ospina was besieged and threatened) and the prevention of a “structural revolution” (Guillén, 1979) propelled by a violent rural class struggle (that was historically promoted by the elite and spilled into the urban world at the beginning of the 1950s<sup>152</sup>) decided to build an Official Administrative Centre (*Centro Administrativo Oficial* – CAO or CAN) far from Bogotá’s densest area. During those years the ‘installed’ president Gustavo Rojas Pinilla took advantage of existing legal instruments that permitted the adoption of extraordinary measures of public order under the state of siege to run the CAN project to ensure protection against “possible further attacks to power” (Niño, 1991: 265) as well as an “efficient, rational, harmonious and neat administration” (Niño, 1991: 264; Romero, 2004: 382; UNAL, 2010: 8).

In order to facilitate these objectives, the firm of architecture Skidmore Owings & Merrill was hired. This North American office proudly presented in 1955 a project of a spatial complex featuring a bizarre mixture of baroque iconography and fordist functionalist space within an isolated spot located in *La Hacienda el Salitre* several kilometres away from the city centre<sup>153</sup>.

Fig. 74. Skidmore Owings & Merrill proposal for the CAO or CAN. Source: PROA (1957)



<sup>152</sup> It is worth mentioning the episode of the burning and looting of Bogotá’s liberal newspapers and the residences of the liberal leaders Alfonso López and Carlos Lleras Restrepo in 1952.

<sup>153</sup> Skidmore Owings & Merrill’s project presentation appears as an eloquent spatial discourse of this critical period characterised by the struggle of *La Hacienda* to survive as dominant structure: “The scale and nature of this plan reflect the monumental concept that gave impetus to the design of large civic developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fact that the distance between the terminal buildings of the east-west axis is about 900 meters, exemplifies the large scale of the project as well as the grandeur and dignity that characterized the gardens of Versailles and the design of the centres of Paris and Washington which reappear in this new centre that will become a monument to the former grandeur, the current industrial development and the bright future of Colombia”. Quoted in Niño (1991: 264). Translation of the original text in Spanish was made by the author of this research.

Yet, the new complex (which included the presidential palace, the ministries and further national administrative units) would be spatially aligned and connected to the north pole of the political-C.B.D i.e. San Diego's area and to the new international airport (built in between 1955 and 1959 and located approximately 12 Km towards west) by means of a new thoroughfare (the *Avenida Calle 26* or *Avenida El Dorado*) that was constructed in between 1952 and 1958.

In particular, the CAN proposal was severely rejected by numerous actors and some employees of the urban planning office who finally quitted. Critics ranged from positivist analogies (e.g. the comparison of the city to a living organism which needs a heart – in its natural place - to survive) to discourses about the importance of tradition. The dictatorship planning team (which manifested the love for the past but also the need of modernity) argued that the proposed location for the CAN project was based on the needs of alleviating 'traffic problems', valorising land by filling 'buildable gaps' and modifying the 'broken' or 'dislocated' linear spatial scheme of the city through the introduction of a more adequate "semi-circular structure"<sup>154</sup> (quoted in Niño, 1991: 265 and Cortés, 2007: 180).

The CAN project was finally developed but fragmentarily applied in regard to form and content. Considering morphological aspects, the dictatorship's public works ministry modified the spatial arrangement in such a manner that the iconic conventions that strongly characterised the project as a locus of absolute power were blurred, especially, the central place of the project. Moreover, the development of the project was managed in such a manner that the typical characteristics of modernism of reflecting functionality in aesthetic manner and favouring 'readability' in the realm of spatial objects (instead of spatial arrangements) prevailed<sup>155</sup>.

The changes in regard to content i.e. functions of the CAN evolved within a strong conjuncture that resulted in the deposition of the installed president Rojas Pinilla. Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship was not only running urban plans on its own (such as the

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<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, it appears evident that the problem of emphasizing linearity or concentricity in this context involved more than functional and economic issues. Once again, the question of linear or concentric spatial configuration entailed the key issue of facilitating (by means of the production of space) the maintenance of spatial practices and power structures but with different cultural (representational) and technological resources.

<sup>155</sup> According to the UNAL's (2010: 8) report on the CAN development, the public works ministry assigned lots to the different national entities which independently developed each administrative building.

CAN) but also political strategies which threatened *La Hacienda's* traditional oligarchical order, principally, the conformation of a third political party: *La Tercera Fuerza* which, inspired in the Argentinean *Justicialismo Peronista*, aimed to get the support of organised workers, the middle class, and the army to remain in power<sup>156</sup>. According to Guillén (1979), this context of detachment of Rojas Pinilla's interests from those of his original tutors (i.e. the traditional elite) was understood as a true menace to the social order. The spatial dimension of this conjuncture was particularly significant in Bogotá and entailed the issue of the CAN project which was increasingly considered as the potential source of a true spatial 'chaos'<sup>157</sup>.

Fig. 75. Mix of semi-circular and linear layouts



Source: Own elaboration based on Niño and Reina (2010: 51)

Nevertheless, after the highly conflictive deposing of Rojas Pinilla, the renewed city's urban planning office (which was composed by public officers that worked before and during the dictatorship) decided to reuse the foundations of buildings as well as already built infrastructure of the CAN project for 'social and educative' purposes (leaving key institutions in the city centre such as the presidential palace). Furthermore, it was decided to introduce the semi-circular/concentric spatial schema suggested during the dictatorship period composed by a layout of motorways that opened the possibility of a vast functionalist physical expansion in a context characterised by rapid

<sup>156</sup> However, the "naïve intent" (Guillén, 1979: 542) of Rojas Pinilla faced the reality in which neither the urban middle class nor the army supported his progressive plans and remained faithful to the traditional oligarchical order.

<sup>157</sup> See Niño's (1991: 265) description of local planner's appraisal of the CAN or – the ironically called – 'C[h]AOS' project.

demographic growth and a great land ownership concentration within Bogotá's rural vicinities<sup>158</sup>.

Fig. 76. CAN area (1960s)



Source: Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC)

The abrupt shift in regard to the planning of the city's spatial schema (i.e. from linear to semi-circular development) and to the limit imposed to physical growth via the *Plan Regulator* appear to be influenced by several interrelated factors. On the one hand, the pressure and criticism of rural land owners within Bogotá's vicinity, and of the associated growing construction sector<sup>159</sup>; on the other hand, the introduction of a paradigm of planning in the 1950s in which the World Bank under the leadership of the economist Lauchin Currie played a key role for about 20 years in Colombia's and Bogotá's economic and urban policies. Currie's intervention meant the final impulse to the construction sector by understanding, politically, the city as a *medium* to achieve economic growth and to overcome 'underdevelopment'. This new instrumentality assigned to the city implied the 'correction' of spatial structures in order to make them more "logic[al] and economic[al]" (Cortés, 2007: 167). This framework might have influenced the substantial change in regard to the planning of Bogotá's general spatial schema, and can also explain the continuance of the idea of creating a semi-circular structure after the deposing of the dictatorship considering the fact that the initiative of

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<sup>158</sup> As figure 69 shows, the concentric schema was planned (and built) against the linear configuration of Bogotá's built space and in contrast to already built thoroughfares that followed the linear spatial pattern and opened large areas characterised by *haciendas* for the construction industry. This topic will be reintroduced in following chapters.

<sup>159</sup> See Niño's and Reina's (2010) historical survey around the issue of the *Plan Regulator*.

promoting a concentric pattern was highly criticised and rejected by local and foreign consultants before and during Rojas Pinilla's regime<sup>160</sup>.

In any case, the resulting spatial impact in regard to Bogotá's spatial structure was decisive in spite of the variations of the CAN project and the confirmation of the city centre as seat of the presidential palace. Numerous ministries as well as further institutions were finally located within the original CAN's area (e.g. research institutes and technical education centres, student residences, the national television's headquarters among other bodies) which permitted, on the one hand, the releasing of the city's centre from the concentration of a great number of public institutions and the introduction of 'intruder' modern spatial codes<sup>161</sup> (e.g. spatial transparency, predominance of objects over arrangements, etc.); and on the other hand, the configuration of a new east-west axis marked by the new thoroughfare named *Avenida El Dorado* (or *Avenida Calle 26*) that connected the north pole of the political-C.B.D (*San Diego's* area) to the National University Campus, the CAN project and the new airport inaugurated in 1959 which became essential for the viability of Bogotá as a business and industrial centre located 2600m above the sea level.

#### **5.2.4.1. New east-west axis and empirical-C.B.D**

The areas of *San Diego* acquired a key role during the last decades of the crisis period of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá. From the 1940s this area was provided with essential qualities for the actualization of 'centrality' i.e. the possibility of accumulation. On the one hand, the area was endowed with strong symbolism via a spatial element of the dominant mode of production that quickly acquired a strong value: the luxurious *Hotel Tequendama*. And on the other hand, the accessibility was indirectly improved via the construction of the political-C.B.D and other subsequent interventions.

The *Hotel Tequendama* was essential for the development of the advanced stage of *La Hacienda's* instrumentalization of the ISI. To begin with, this building was

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<sup>160</sup> However, more concrete details about the influence of Currie in the planning of Bogotá's general structure during the 1950s are difficult to obtain since a fundamental document around this issue cannot be consulted: Currie's and Peñalosa's *Un Plan para Bogotá para el Consejo de Planificación* (1953). See Cortés (2007: 167).

<sup>161</sup> This topic related to the actions taken in the city centre will be developed further below.

fundamental for hosting key foreign negotiators and partners<sup>162</sup> of the industrialisation process who also participated in the selection of the hotel's location and final construction. At the representational level, the building worked as a fundamental spatial element of the linear political-C.B.D since it was aimed to define the northern pole of this key project run by the elites. Moreover, the project of the hotel was rescued by the external consultants (mentioned above) included it within the planning of *San Diego* as a cultural sub-centre of Bogotá's *Centro Cívico*<sup>163</sup>.

Fig. 77. Hotel Tequendama (1951). View from the recently opened axial avenue of the political-C.B.D (south-north direction)



Source: *El Tiempo*

At the same time, being traditionally marked by a convent, *San Diego* was a historical meeting point of three roads (the *Carrera Séptima* or former *Camino Viejo* and the *Carrera 13* or former *Camino Nuevo* in north-south direction, and the road to the west or to the central cemetery in east-west direction) in which new linear elements

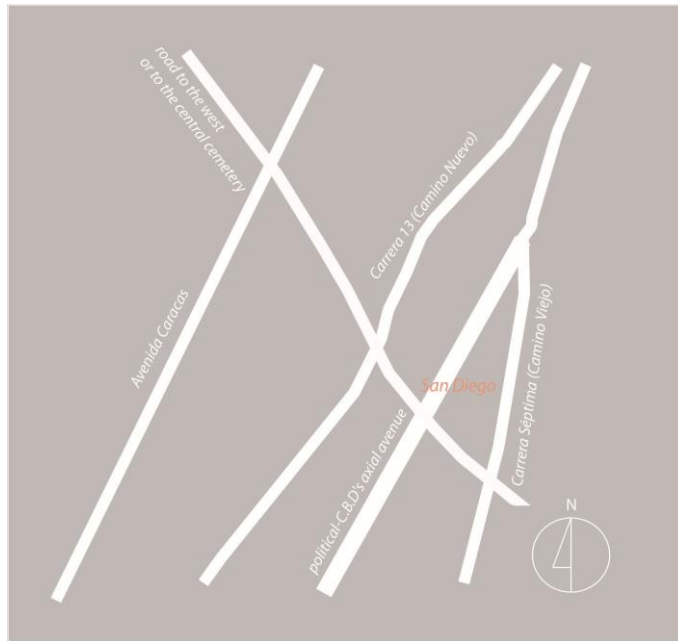
<sup>162</sup> From 1953 (i.e. the hotel's inauguration date) to 1959 the hotel *Tequendama* had hosted 145,000 guests.

<sup>163</sup> See a detailed description of the components of Wiener's and Sert's *Plan Regulador* and its *Centro Cívico* in Carvajal (1953).



converged during the 20<sup>th</sup> century reinforcing the city's linear spatial pattern, namely the *Avenida Caracas* (a former avenue built in the 1930s that integrated several *barrios residenciales* and communicated them to the city centre) and the *Carrera Décima* i.e. the political-C.B.D's axial avenue (1945-1960), both in north-south direction.

Fig. 78. *San Diego's* crossroads



Source: Own elaboration

During the 1950s (i.e. before, during and after Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship) the linear section composed by the *Avenida Caracas* and the *Carrera 13* is turned into a potent 'through traffic' instrument contradicting the mobility plan suggested in Wiener's, Sert's and Le Corbusier's master plans. The already mentioned pro-Hispanic and Franquist political figure Laureano Gómez (whose authoritarian government preceded Rojas' dictatorship) and his minister of public works (who continued working for the subsequent installed government) planned a 22.5 Km linear motorway (the *Autopista Norte*) upon the vice-regal axial path that once connected the *Puente del Común*<sup>164</sup> to Chapinero and *San Diego*.

This action in the territory appears quite similar to that taken in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the crown which was aimed at improving the accessibility of Bogotá from the northern regions dominated by *La Hacienda* in times of brutal restoration of authority. Indeed, the objective of this motorway in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not differ as

<sup>164</sup> See chapter 5.1.2.

much from the vice-regal spatial strategies which, by means of a rational linear axis, improved accessibility conditions and accentuated the location of Bogotá as a locus of ‘authoritarian power’<sup>165</sup>. Moreover, the *Parque Centenario*, the *Parque de la Independencia* and the road to the west that led to the central cemetery were transformed into the eastern edge of the new east-west axis (the *Avenida El Dorado*).

Fig. 79. Recycling viceregal infrastructure



Source: Newspaper article *El Siglo* (1950) and aerial view of the *Autopista Norte* in 1962 - original source unknown. Taken from Zambrano (2007: 224)

<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, the *Autopista Norte* had further functions within that context, principally opening the possibility for sub-urbanization and land speculation. This issue will be reintroduced further below.



It is important to point out that the construction of these spatial elements together with a new set of concentric motorways (particularly, the *Avenida Boyacá*, *Autopista Sur* and the *Avenida 68*) meant the introduction of a new spatiality characterised by a radical spatial specialization (fundamental for the subsequent generalization of the private car) that required the previous weakening and replacement of the existing transport technology in the local, regional and national level.

Fig. 80. Concentric motorways through *haciendas*. *Avenida 68* (1968)



Source: Original source unknown.  
Taken from Zambrano (2007: 265)

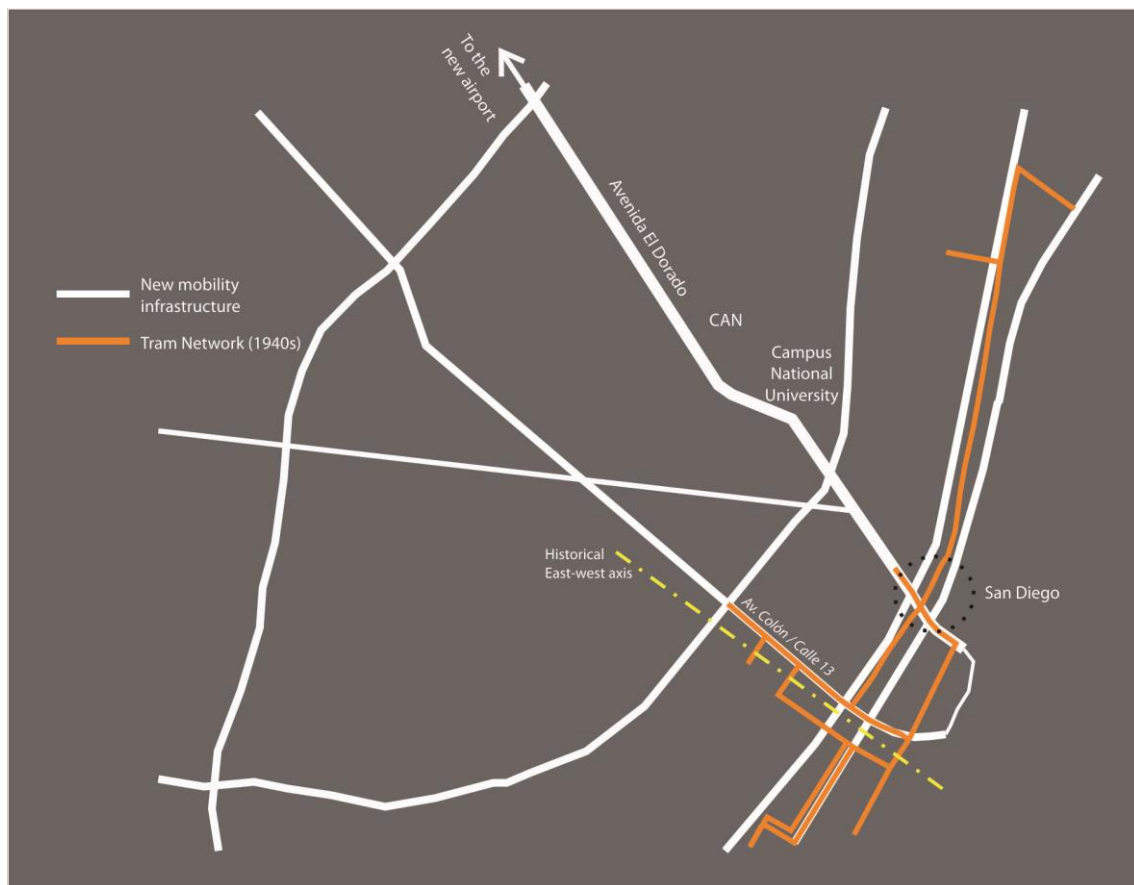
This transport technology was based on rail systems and despite of its good performance there was an increasing and conscious “disinvestment” (Jaramillo & Parias, 1995: 71). Such disinvestment particularly affected the public tram network in Bogotá, which converged in the *Avenida Colón* or *Calle 13* i.e. Bogotá’s historical east-west axis where the main train station was located. Moreover, the tram had to compete with formal and informal private buses that were owned by increasingly influential political-businessmen<sup>166</sup>. Finally, the car’s universal meaning of ‘progress’ was used to justify politically the termination of the tram service at the beginning of the 1950s, this measure entailed significant historical and socio-political aspects<sup>167</sup>.

<sup>166</sup> This means that the owners of the buses contributed to voting in the campaigns for the city council, in some cases the transport business man and city counsellor were the same person.

<sup>167</sup> The trains’ as well as the tram’s companies were already a traditional space for the unions’ struggles which, as argued above, were historically decisive in the changing of *La Hacienda*’s traditional social and political values. This aspect among several significant circumstances mentioned by Jaramillo and Parias (1995) breaks the myth historically installed about the termination of the tram service because of the destructions caused ‘by the masses’ during the riot of 1948 in which only the 35% of the trams were destroyed. Moreover, it has been also proved that the attacks to the tram were not spontaneously produced but an act promoted by the owners of the private buses i.e. the main competitors of the public tram company who took advantage of the general confusion during the riot.

Such transformation in the city's transport technology ended up influencing the one of the two historical axes in Bogotá's spatial structure. The functional and semiotic potential of the *Avenida Colón* declined in favour of new junction points of the new mobility infrastructure, principally, *San Diego*'s area. In this sense, whilst the *Avenida Colón* was deprived of its 'French fancy dress' composed by elegant furniture and lighting and transformed into a thoroughfare similar to the rest of motorways built in that period, *San Diego*'s area was becoming a highly privileged area in regards to accessibility from all geographical directions<sup>168</sup>. Indeed, this situation shifted in a significant manner as *San Diego*'s spatial hierarchy created a potential city-centre, which was highly functional at the local, regional, national and international scales; not to mention the special interest of influential sectors in this area and the urban plans were developed by external consultants for *San Diego* at the end of the 1940s and beginning of 1950s.

Fig. 81. Decline of historical east-west axis



Source: Own elaboration based on Jaramillo and Parias (1995: 66)

<sup>168</sup> See figures 78 and 48.

The concentration of all these semiotic and physical conditions in *San Diego*'s area appeared quite attractive. On the one hand, it was attractive to real-estate actors who, according to Cortés (2007), started to operate within a context of increasing privileges and liberalization of land use, despite the legal dispositions for urban containment developed in general master plans such as the *Plan Regulador*<sup>169</sup>; and on the other hand, it was also attractive to the installed and highly instrumental dictatorship that established a more flexible and short-term *Plan Nacional de Obras Públicas* (National Public Works Plan). The *Plan Nacional* overpowered the boundaries set by the *Plan Regulador* and functioned as a key propagandistic instrument for the display of the regime's effectiveness to overcome the socio-economic crisis of the beginning of the 1950s. This regime sought a solution for this crisis by deepening traditional ISI strategies (i.e. political defence of the interests of the small agro-industrial elite, massive import of capital goods, etc.<sup>170</sup>), and by defeating the emerging guerrilla forces.

In this context, the first and biggest architectural firm: Cuellar Serrano Gómez, which was "closest to political power" (Niño & Reina, 2010; Saldarriaga, 2006), developed the office building *Edificio Bochica* (1953-1956) next to the *Hotel Tequendama* (built by the same firm from 1950 to 1953) as well as additional urban designs (published in 1958 in the journal *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*) to integrate these two buildings into a future mixed-use spatial arrangement characterised by

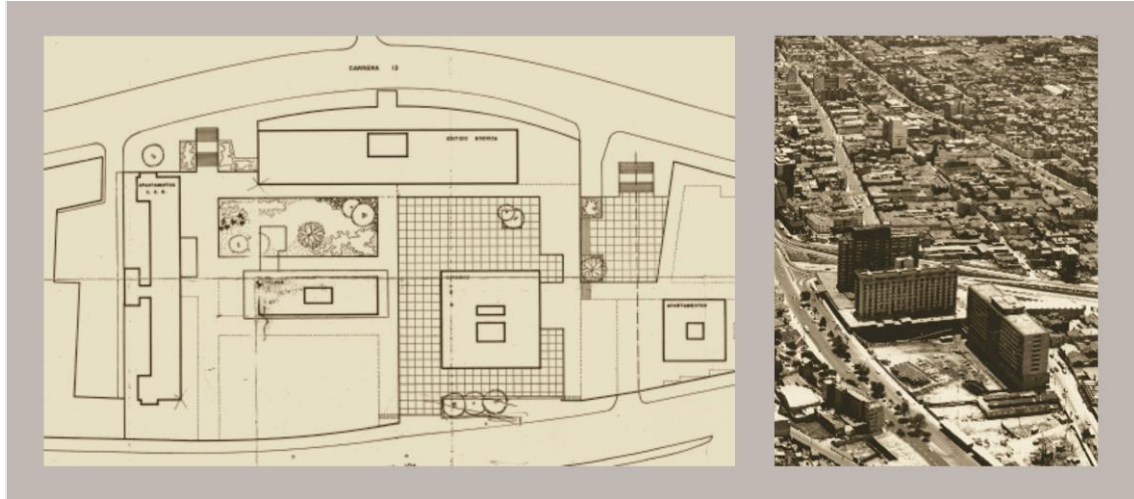
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<sup>169</sup> During the last two decades of the crisis period of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá i.e. from the 1950s to the 1970s, urban planning was characterised by a strong contradiction between general and sectorial planning, and liberalization of land use. Drawing on Cortés (2007), several master plans were meant to encourage urban growth as a means of 'social development' and to control the desirable physical expansion of the city through concepts such as "cities within the city" (FIDEICOMISO CIUDAD SALITRE, 1998: 3). These plans were designed but never really applied e.g. *Alternativas para el desarrollo urbano de Bogotá* (1967) and *Fase II* (1974) financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and designed by English-North American firms (Llewelyn Davies Weeks Forestier Walker & Bor, Kates Peat Marwick & Co and Coopers & Librand) in association with the local urban planning office *Consultécnicos*. This situation contrasted, on the one hand, to the development of sectorial plans (e.g. the PIDUZOB - 1975) demanded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) which were fragmentarily applied by local authorities to respond to the increasing demands of vulnerable social sectors; and on the other hand, to the liberalization of land use in the context of the disregard of general principles suggested via the master plans mentioned above e.g. concentric and/or poly-centric development. This fluctuation might have responded to several aspects such as the dependence to external financing to face the rapid demographic growth produced by *La Hacienda*'s politics and conflicts, the political struggles between the traditional political parties within the figure of *El Frente Nacional*, and the interests of land owners and local developers who have historically seen urban planning in Bogotá as a constraint that undermines immediate profits.

<sup>170</sup> At the beginning of the 1950s the growth of the secondary sector was very low, yet the dictatorship period (1953-1957) coincided with a considerable rising of coffee prices in the international markets which influenced the Colombian economy. During these five years most dollar expenditures were destined for the purchase of equipment and machinery for large industries. See Guillén (1979: 534/543).

modern aesthetics which did not respond to any of the previous urban designs suggested for San Diego's area through the *Plan Piloto* and the *Plan Regulador*.

Fig. 82. Alternative designs for *San Diego's* area and aerial view (1960s)



Source: Cuellar Serrano Gómez and Colección Museo de Bogotá - Saúl Ordúz

The convergence of the spatial conditions described above (i.e. physical accessibility and high symbolic value) in addition to Cuellar Serrano Gómez's urban design interests and the construction of the *Edificio Bochica* next to the *Hotel Tequendama* defined a particular tendency. This tendency consisted in the establishment of *San Diego's* area as the display of the nation's 'progress', and it developed just after the dictatorship period. This is when the traditional elite established new strategies to maintain the political power and the related social loyalties, primarily, the political figure of *El Frente Nacional* imposed from 1958 to 1974. Within this conjuncture, Fernando Mazuera Villegas (twice mayor and one of the main precursors of the political-C.B.D project) was put in charge of the spatial materialization of the image of 'progress' by the transitional military junta. In his third administration period he was responsible for 'the completion'<sup>171</sup> of Bogotá's public works master plan. Mazuera Villegas, highly supported by local architects, quickly obtains a huge loan and develops many infrastructural mobility projects. In particular, a semi-depressed motorway junction that replaced a Parisian-like round point at the northern pole of the political-C.B.D and right next to the *Hotel Tequendama*. This infrastructural work required the demolishing of an important section of the parks of *Centenario* and *Independencia* that

<sup>171</sup> For further details see Niño's and Reina's (2010: 132ff) depiction of the different political and spatial events that took place during 1957.

used to define the northern outskirts of Bogotá at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of initial protests, such intervention replaced the already old ‘French-bourgeois fancy dress’ of this sector. It introduced a space more compatible to the dominant group’s representations of ‘progress’ and ‘industrial modernity’, in other words, the model imposed by the Colombian elites in which the U.S.A played a key role and whose modern geography clearly influenced local planners’ representations of space.

Fig. 83. Fordist space as iconic device of social control  
Former round point and motorway junction (northern end of political-C.B.D 1950s/1960s)



Source: Colección Museo de Bogotá - Saúl Ordúz

From our framework, this project entailed iconic features of a nascent fordist functionalist modernity foreign to the Colombian reality. This is a reality characterised by the political need of spatial devices for persuasion and social control<sup>172</sup> (e.g. the construction of the political-C.B.D and the demolishing of the *plazas de mercado*) and not by a true demand to host vast motorization, massive production and consumption.

At the end of this period the area of *San Diego* turns into an attractive location for big capitals and the development of elitist housing which were spatialized through the convention of ‘verticality’. This phenomenon develops during the 1960s and 1970s and responds to several specific aspects. To begin with, the absence of height

<sup>172</sup> In this sense, it is worth mentioning the declarations of the political leader Carlos Lleras Restrepo who underlined that the aim of *El Frente Nacional* which was to support the actions of public officers such as the laborious and dedicated mayor Mazuera Villegas independently of political affiliations. In this regard, see quotations of the response of Lleras Restrepo to Mazuera Villegas about the potential resignation of the mayor in 1958 in Niño and Reina (2010: 135ff).



regulations which did operate during the previous decades with specific projects, mainly, the political-C.B.D which featured a dominant horizontal skyline<sup>173</sup>. It also responds to the notable growth of companies which acquired a dominant position and were willing to represent spatially this position within Colombia's main centre of political power. Additionally, the contradictory development of densification strategies to counteract what was already seen in the 1960s as an "excessive expansion" (Cortés, 2007) of the city within a dominant context characterised by urban growth as a 'tool' of social development, as well as an instrument to achieve capital accumulation. Finally, the construction boom in this area of the city had also to do with the new technological possibilities provided by foreign and national construction companies. These organisations were able to further develop the use of concrete and steel in the Colombian context and built numerous high rise buildings<sup>174</sup> within *San Diego's* area, a central space which was later on named Bogotá's *Centro Internacional*.

Fig. 84. *Centro Internacional* (1970s)



Source: Ramón Gutiérrez

In general, we observe that the *Centro Internacional* evolves as a space principally produced by the successful perpetuation and reinforcement of the ISI's

<sup>173</sup> This skyline was only broken by a couple of skyscrapers: the *Colseguros* building and the tower of the *Banco de Bogotá*. Both occupied the whole front of a block, this was a precondition to build more than 12 stories. The *Colseguros* building was constructed in 1974, when the limits in terms of height were neither a priority to the city administration, nor to the architectural competitions to project buildings of the country's main companies in the 1960s. See the case of the architectural competition for the *Avianca* tower (1963-1970) in Saldarriaga (2006: 189f).

<sup>174</sup> For the construction of the first skyscrapers e.g. the tower of the *Banco de Bogotá* within the political-C.B.D (1955) the architectural designs as well as thousands of tons of steel were imported. In subsequent decades, local firms were able to develop complex designs and the growing industries in Colombia supplied materials for the new construction technologies.

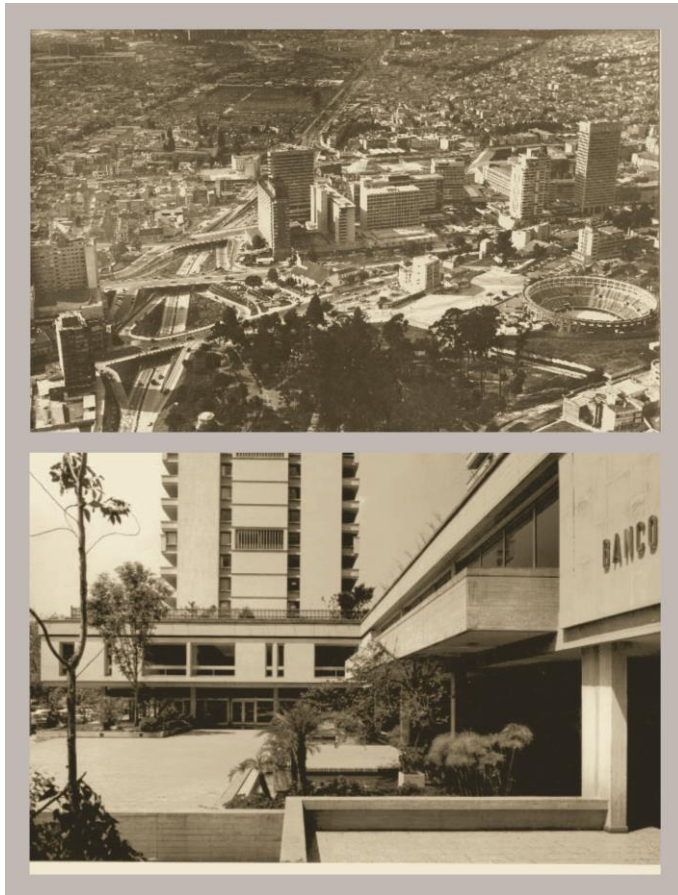
policies. In this context there is general dominium of the financial-industrial sector that was highly related to a paternalist and authoritarian political power. In reference to our theoretical-methodological framework, this space can be acknowledged as a kind of ‘empirical-C.B.D’ that was (and still is) gradually configured according to the actions of diverse private and public actors who ended up influencing a strong shift in the location of the highest land prices in the city<sup>175</sup>. These actors adopted ‘verticality’ to introduce a new form to represent power within the cityscape and created a legible spatial unit. However, the *Centro Internacional* can be also acknowledged as a ‘fragment’ of Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration. This is a fragment that, on the one hand, deeply altered the city’s spatial hierarchy, and on the other hand, differed in functional, spatial and aesthetic terms from the main spatial signs i.e. the sub-centres of the traditional *Plaza de Bolívar* (i.e. the main signifier of political power), the *Avenida Jiménez*’ crossroad and the recently built political-C.B.D (i.e. the space dominated by the emerging powerful associations).

Regarding ‘presentative characteristics’, the *Centro Internacional* appears as both, a ‘perceived’ and a ‘conceived’ central space characterised by ‘fullness’ and ‘emptiness’ through modern aesthetics. To begin with, the *Centro Internacional* is marked by its grounding spatial sign: the solid building of the *Hotel Tequendama* which was complemented by a set of towers placed within an introverted commercial platform. These towers were gradually built in such a manner that the overall arrangement seems like a ‘conceived’ or planned space. As a result, the whole arrangement can be identified as a lengthened solid unit that features visual transparencies and the possibility of pedestrian permeability in east-west direction and the flux of motorized traffic in north-south direction. This spatial configuration permitted the concentration of exclusive retail, high rank offices of the major national industries, and upper middle class housing promoted by the city administration and constructed with private investments.

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<sup>175</sup> According to Jaramillo’s (2012: 62f) research of Bogotá’s land price changing patterns, in the 1960s *La Plaza de Bolívar*’s northern quarters presented the highest land prices in the city. At the end of the 1970s the highest prices were located within the area of the *Centro Internacional*.

Fig. 85. Aerial view of *Tequendama*'s spatial complex with residential towers and semi-depressed motorway junction. Street view of introverted commercial/pedestrian platforms (1970s)

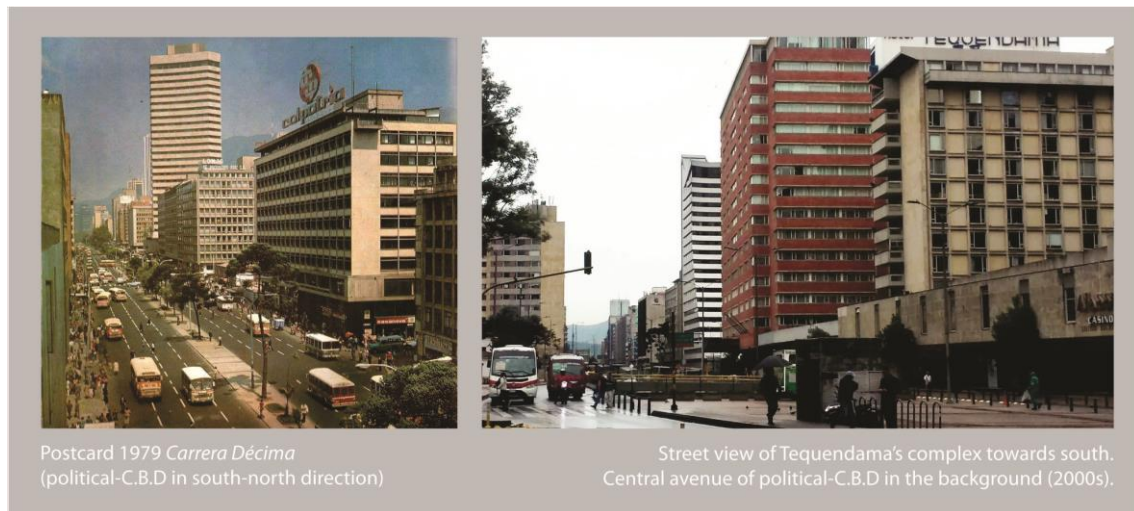


Source: Saúl Ordúz / Paul Beer

The successful construction of this space came along with a scarcity of space for the tertiary sector and for official housing strategies. Numerous skyscrapers designed for housing and to host managerial activities surrounded the *Tequendama*'s spatial complex and other spatial referents of *San Diego*'s area e.g. the national museum, the bullring, *San Diego*'s chapel, the new city's planetarium and the residual green space that resulted from the construction of the semi-depressed motorway junction. Hence, during the last years of this period there was a further concentration of towers and high rise buildings within *San Diego*. However, these new spatial elements did not respond to the logic of concentration of the existing sub-centres. We refer to the 'linearity' of the political-C.B.D and the introverted configuration of the *Tequendama*'s spatial complex; both spaces were physically connected through the linear avenue of the political-C.B.D (see fig. 86)



Fig. 86. Linearity and physical interconnection of political-C.B.D (1979) and *Tequendama's* spatial complex (*Centro Internacional*, 2015)

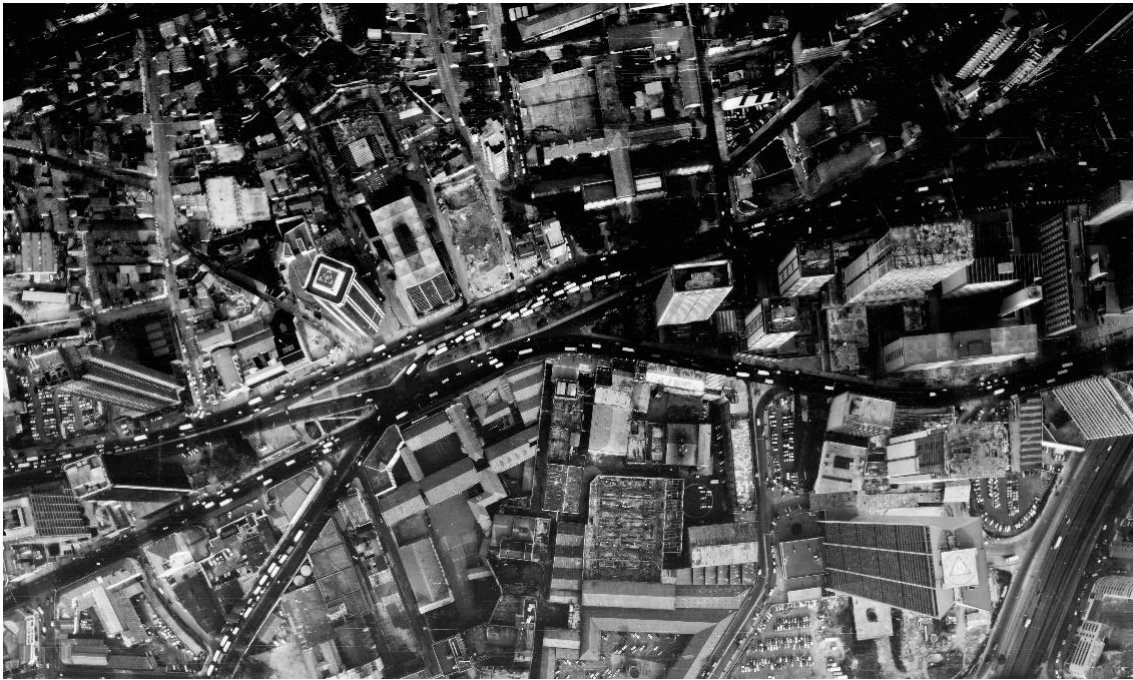


Source: Own elaboration. Source of postcard unknown

The further location of high buildings and skyscrapers within *San Diego's* area followed the typical tendency of modernity that consists in the prevalence of transparency and readability of spatial objects which are invested with 'individuality' for economical, functional and representational ends. Principally, the maximization of the use of a single lot, the achievement of an immediate and efficient connection between numerous dependencies through the instalment of lifts and the upright disposition of numerous floors, as well as the introduction of 'verticality', which is a universal spatial convention of potential power. In this manner, around twelve corporative skyscrapers featuring diverse architectural styles were built during the last years of this period. For example, the *Seguros Tequendama* building (1972), *Seguros Colombia* building (1972), *Seguros Fenix* building (1975), the Hotel Hilton (1978), the *Centro de las Américas* or *Bancafé* (1977) and Colombia's highest building until the 2000s, the *Torre Colpatria* (1979)<sup>176</sup>.

<sup>176</sup> Just quite a few skyscrapers were built out of San Diego's area. In particular, the *Torre Avianca* (1969) placed in the *Parque Santander* (right at the place of the *humilladero* which marked Bogotá's original market place until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), and the tower of the *Banco Ganadero* (1973) located nearby.

Fig. 87. Dominant spatial texture of the ISI period  
Aerial view of *Centro Internacional* at the end of the 1970s



Source: Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC)

The spatial concentration of these elements were complemented by the development of the contradictory official housing strategy known as the *Torres del Parque* (1969) which were left open to the appropriation of high-income sectors (usually associated to an ‘intellectual’ layer of the society with ‘alternative’ tastes) even though the buildings were meant and financed for the middle class. In the case of this vertical housing complex, there are aesthetical and morphological particularities. On the one hand, the complex featured a particular architectural style associated by local and regional architecture critics to a true ‘Colombian organicism’ which contrasted to the international style widely used up to that date. And on the other hand, it appeared as a ‘conceived’ arrangement of vertical elements according to horizontal and round elements, particularly, the bullring (1931) and the planetarium (1969). In this sense, this space stood against the spatial logic of ‘individuality’ that started to characterise the whole *Centro Internacional*.

Fig. 88. *Torres del Parque* (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

Nevertheless, the *Centro Internacional* appears mostly as a ‘perceived space’, an empirical-C.B.D composed by diverse ‘free standing’ and ‘planned-like’ configurations that are fixed to an existing irregular grid of streets and motorways. From our perspective, the city centre *Centro Internacional* evolves as a sort of ‘spatial creation’ in which foreign elements are reproduced in such a manner that singularity ends up as the prevalent spatial feature. In this sense, the *Centro Internacional* is not a pure ‘cultural reproduction’ or ‘fake’ in spite that most of the actors involved in its configuration borrowed architectural styles as well as the universal and modern iconic convention of verticality mostly used within the North American urban geography during those years.

In sum, the *Centro Internacional* can be understood as an expression of ‘modern urban centrality’ in Bogotá that was juxtaposed to the other pre-modern and modern manifestations of urban centrality. It is also a creation of local spatial practices and social structures which required representing their prestige and authority within the country’s main core of power. The city’s spatial structure is strongly characterised by the linear combination of the signifiers of powerful economic and political associations

that require each other to maintain their hegemony. This semiotic relationship will be developed further below.

#### **5.2.4.2. Political city centre as sub-system and enhancing of Bogotá's traditional north-south axis**

Whilst the increasing power of the financial-industrial sector was being represented through 'monumental linearity' and 'verticality', features related to the historical code of 'spatial nobility' (e.g. quadrangular plan, secular horizontality, sacral vertical accentuations, symmetry, etc.) were adopted in order to confirm and reinforce the society's socio-political order

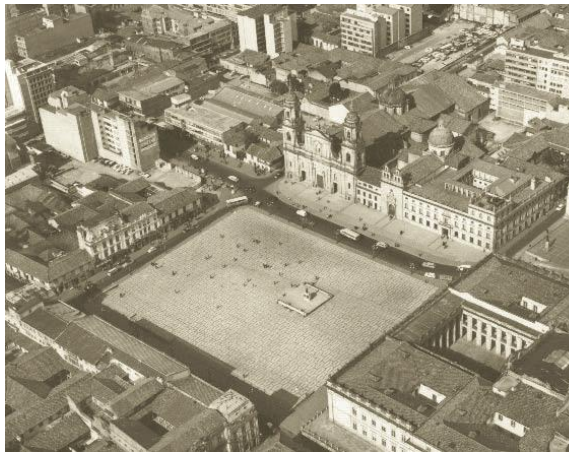
After the rejection of Le Corbusier's, Sert's and Wiener's reformist plans for the *Plaza de Bolívar*, the city's planning department promoted an urban design competition to intervene this space with the support of the political-cultural elite. This political initiative took place in the context of the resuming the CAN project and of its re-functionalization which presupposed the permanence of key national institutions within the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area such as the presidential palace. Without any influence of internal or external urban heritage protection discourses<sup>177</sup>, the competition suggested a set of essential preconditions. In particular, the achievement of a spatial expression appropriate to 'the political past and present of the square'. Moreover, there were some requirements related to Le Corbusier's propositions for this space such as the removal of the ornamental bourgeois-like fountains and parking lots as well as the promotion of the square's historical 'austerity and monumentality'<sup>178</sup>.

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<sup>177</sup> The official approval of the competition took place in 1959 before the introduction and generalization of architectural and/or urban heritage programs and policies. According to Segre (1986: 70ff), the first initiatives for architectural and urban preservation in Latin America emerged in the 1960s through diverse documents and events (e.g. the first Pan American symposium of preservation and restoration of historical monuments – 1964, the *Normas de Quito* – 1967) that acquired continental relevance only until the beginning of the 1980s. In the case of Bogotá, the first initiatives to preserve spatial elements appeared in 1959 as a spontaneous reaction of conservative dominant sectors to the increasing demolition of old buildings in Bogotá's city centre. However, such reaction did not occur according to a general strategic discourse of preservation of spatial arrangements directed towards particular cultural, political or economic purposes such as the remembering of historical events or the adaptation of spaces for commercial and leisure purposes (e.g. promotion of tourism). In fact, according to Jaramillo (2012: 72), the laws and organizations set in 1959 (e.g. *Junta de Defensa del Patrimonio*) for architectural preservation had very little impact and did not include strategies to preserve spatial arrangements – only individual constructions.

<sup>178</sup> See details about the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s urban design competition in *Corporación La Candelaria* (2000), Niño (1991: 316f) and Martínez (1978: 162f/197)

Fig. 89. Urban design intervention in the *Plaza de Bolívar* (1960)



Source: Saúl Ordúz. Colección Museo de Bogotá

The outcome was the materialization of the winner proposal which, in order to apply the competition's design preconditions, maintained the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s shape and size<sup>179</sup>, the buildings located on the eastern, western and southern edges (i.e. the cathedral and the contiguous religious buildings - east, the city hall - west and the Capitol - south), and finally, the historical and 'noble' soberness of the square's surface. The selected project was quickly developed and followed by a series of architectural competitions and interventions which, under specific political-spatial strategies, entailed the location of key institutional buildings at and nearby the square.

From our perspective the most important ones were two projects. On the one hand, the building of the Court House (1970) which, reintroducing the horizontality and symmetry of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s bordering secular buildings (i.e. the Capitol and the city hall), defined the northern edge of the square that was formerly demarcated by some residences and stores<sup>180</sup>. In this manner, the square's traditional boundaries, shape

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<sup>179</sup> It is usually argued that the rejection of Le Corbusier's, Wiener's and Sert's proposal for the *Plaza de Bolívar* had to do only with the municipality's financial limits to develop such an ambitious project. However, the historical, structural and semiotic approach developed in this study overcomes this sort of reductionist economic explanations (see previous chapters). This situation becomes more patent when being reminded of the fact that the alternative CAN project was proposed and developed (during and after the dictatorship period) in spite of its construction that entailed huge "cost overruns" (Niño 1991: 264f) from the very beginning due to the characteristics of the soil of Bogotá's western periphery. This was a technical situation known by the municipality through the development and discussion of the master plans proposed by foreign consultants in between 1947 and 1953. Moreover, subsequent interventions within the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area demanded numerous expropriations and demolition of historical and representative buildings.

<sup>180</sup> The design and construction of this building was entrusted to highly influential local architects (e.g. Cruz & Londoño, Bermúdez and Martínez) and specifically to the architecture office Cuellar Serrano



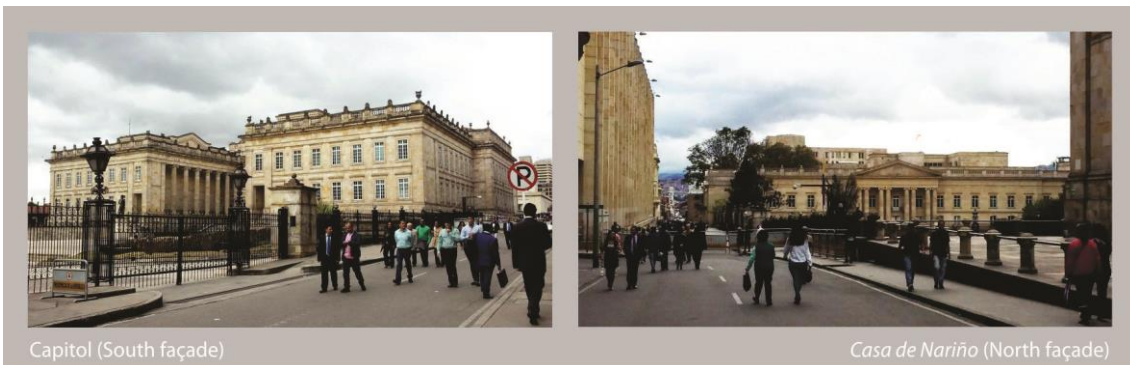
and size were maintained as well as the dominance of the cathedral's vertical accentuations. And on the other hand, the expensive and huge extension of the presidential palace or *Casa de Nariño* (1978) which was initially planned to occupy the very centre of the CAN project.

Fig. 90. Court House at the northern edge of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (1985)



Source: *El Tiempo*

Fig. 91. Capitol and Casa de Nariño (enlargement of presidential palace). In between the two buildings, the new *Plaza de Armas* (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

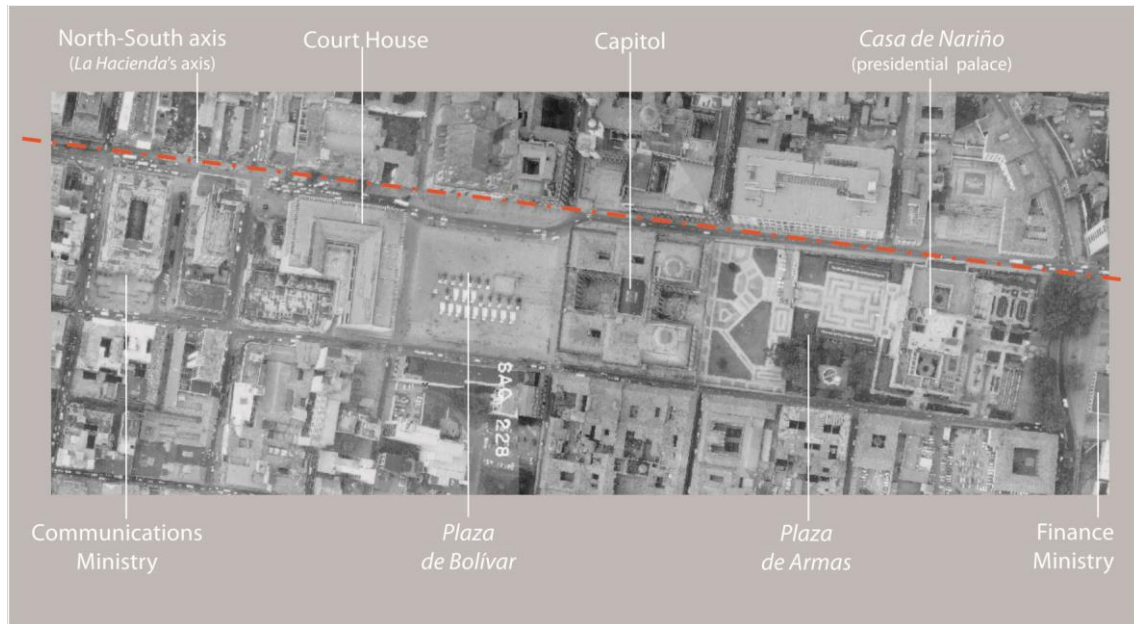
The second project included two main spatial elements. First, a monumental and horizontal building featuring neo-classical ornament that functioned as the extension of the original presidential palace that was located a hundred metres away from the Capitol in south direction, at the city's original north-south axis i.e. at the *Carrera Séptima*. Second, a new *Plaza de Armas* located in between the Capitol and the new presidential palace for military parades and diplomatic receptions. This intervention required the

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Gómez, a key actor in the design and construction of main buildings of the empirical and political-C.B.D. The design of the building included a tower which was strongly rejected by the architectural critic of the time and was never built.

expropriation and demolition of an entire block that contained numerous historically relevant public buildings (e.g. *La Casa de la Expedición Botánica*, the post administrative building, the *Camilo Torres' house*).

Fig. 92. Re-introduction of pre-modern urban centrality features (1970s)



Source: Own elaboration based on Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC).  
Aerial view at the end of 1970s

In this sense, it is possible to identify that beyond financial/economic factors and functional considerations, semiotic aspects played a key role in the distribution and organization of the required socio-spatial concentration of political power within this period of crisis. From our perspective, the selective and elitist modernisation process functionally required the reproduction of socio-political forms as well as of their representations in space. In particular, essential aspects of the city's pre-modern urban centrality code were re-introduced such as the spatial concentration of the main political and religious institutions according to historical presentative and representative features connected to 'authoritarianism'. In this regard, we principally refer to the reinforcement of the presentative qualities and repetition of an essential iconic resource such as a *Plaza de Armas*; and to the strengthening of the north-south axis as fundamental indexical sign of the location of authority via the introduction of the new *Plaza* and presidential palace. This intervention reinforced the tendency of locating national ministries and other institutions on the traditional north-south axis.

From our perspective, the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area was turned into a specialised spatial sub-system within the crisis period. This sub-system was spatially configured through noble conventions which were functional (in semiotic terms) to general socio-spatial structures increasingly characterised by the coexistence of pre-modern and modern codes. In this regard, a key element of the spatial unfolding of the crisis was the definition of a highly specialised political city centre that, on the one hand, confirms the prevalence and endurance of the traditional socio-political structure via its presentative characteristics; and on the other hand, appears interconnected to the whole territory by enhancing and making use of a key functional and representational resource: the traditional north-south axis.

#### **5.2.5. Final statements on the crisis period: 'spatial fragmentation'**

In examining our analytical results, it is possible to identify, in general terms, a fragmentary materialization of 'modern urban centrality' which features the transgression of pre-modern spatial signs, the introduction of verticality as dominant convention, etc. at the end of the crisis period. This fragmentary materialization is related to the use of particular socio-spatial strategies permeated by great contradictions that are expressed via the antagonism of pre-modern as well as modern spatial codes. According to the historical and socio-spatial facts analysed above, such codes had been applied in particular ways on behalf of the introduction of new practices without jeopardizing previous power relations and their related representations, particularly, those connected to *La Hacienda*.

The main outcome at the end of the crisis period (i.e. 1970s) is a spatial arrangement that entails a set of principles and elements related to particular urban centrality dynamics. On the one hand, there are three principles related to a strong opposition of main secular and sacral spatial signs: first, the antagonism of modern and noble spatial textures; second, the juxtaposition of representational spaces of 'exchange' and of 'political power and religiosity'; and third, the establishment of a strong functional and symbolic polarity within the territory (i.e. the case of the political-C.B.D's luxurious hotel and hospital for the masses). These three aspects are connected to the introduction and definition of three main spatial elements. First, a new east-west axis linked to an 'empirical-C.B.D'; second, a strong 'political city centre' (*La Plaza de Bolívar*) which is juxtaposed to the third and last element: a 'political-C.B.D' that is



associated to a strong process of *citybildung*. On the other hand, there are several dynamics connected to fundamental aspects of urban centrality. In order to identify such dynamics and relate them to the principles and elements mentioned above, we propose eight statements and a diagram:

- The main pre-modern indexical sign of urban centrality (i.e. the arrangement of the north-south and east-west axes) was partly transgressed. Whilst essential functional and semiotic values of the north-south axis were maintained (e.g. provision of accessibility to the city centre, reference of the location of authority, etc.), the east-west axis was weakened and replaced, particularly, it lost its functional and semiotic quality as 'gate' for the massive arrival of people and goods from distant locations.

- This affectation at the indexical level contributed to a 'displacement' of the city's 'representative condition' and 'spatial hierarchy'. Principally, the traditional overlapping of the societal, spatial, and topographical centres within *La Plaza de Bolívar*'s area was seriously affected. Neither the city's original centre nor the new city centre types clearly dominate and/or organise the rest of central and peripheral elements.

- This situation is correlated to functional aspects e.g. accessibility as well as to iconic, indicative and symbolic relations between primary spatial signs. The 'empirical-C.B.D' i.e. the *Centro Internacional* with its predominant accessibility conditions at the local, national and international scales tends to overcome the functional hierarchy of the original city centre area. At the same time, there is an ambiguous circumstance in regards to the general representative condition of the city. Neither the combination of sacral verticality and secular horizontality (arranged via quadrangular forms and symmetrical relations within the *Plaza de Bolívar*) nor monumental linearity/verticality (i.e. the main conventions of the political and empirical-C.B.Ds) appears as dominant conventions. In other words, no 'logic of visualization' or 'iconic expression' clearly prevails which leads to the following statements:

- The historical spatial hierarchy and representativeness of 'politics and religiosity' blurs. This is a result of the increasing socio-spatial status of the *Centro Internacional*<sup>181</sup> which denotes an iconic manner, where the power of dominant

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<sup>181</sup> In this context, the term *Centro Internacional* refers to the meeting point of the northern edge of the political-C.B.D, the eastern edge of the new east-west axis and the empirical-C.B.D as a whole.

exchange processes i.e. the money and finance market. From our perspective, the empowerment of a small financial and industrial elite via the politics of *La Hacienda* during the 20<sup>th</sup> century highly influenced this spatial phenomenon. It is significant that such phenomenon develops in spite of the parallel reinforcement of the presentative qualities of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area i.e. 'concentration' and 'sacralisation' of traditional political power via noble conventions and additional elements e.g. the new presidential palace and *Plaza de Armas*.

- A strong fragmentary condition is therefore created. Each city centre type appears as a strong spatial subsystem but neither of them gathers the quality of being the social, spatial, and topographical centre. Whilst the morphological qualities of *La Plaza de Bolívar*'s area still refer to strong values and practices (e.g. religious and political traditionalism) - and therefore can be seen as a socio-spatial centre at the end of the crisis period, the area of the *Centro Internacional* and its surroundings increasingly express the social importance and authority of new collective actors and of social activities. Moreover, neither *La Plaza de Bolívar*'s area nor the *Centro Internacional* possesses the quality of being the city's topographical centre. This category starts to apply to the CAN at the end of the 1970s taking into consideration the location of some important institutions and the new political limits of Bogotá.

- The ambiguous situation between the hierarchy/representativeness of traditional/sacral and modern/secular spatial signs seems to be stabilized by a third element. The sacral peaks of *Monserate* and *Guadalupe* visually dominate both, the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s area and the *Centro Internacional*. The peaks seen as a whole can be understood as a strong iconic sign<sup>182</sup> which affects the overall meaning of the spatial arrangement as well as its adjacent and distant periphery. In this context, the strong value of religious/catholic practices and their semiotic force are unarguably dominant. This idea acquires sense considering that there had not been a significant intent to transgress the space conformed by the peaks e.g. whether by changing its function or replacing the buildings and signs located at the top of the mountains.

- 'Authoritarianism' as practice and as 'signified' survived the crisis period through socio-political figures and spatial expressions, particularly, *El Frente Nacional* and the

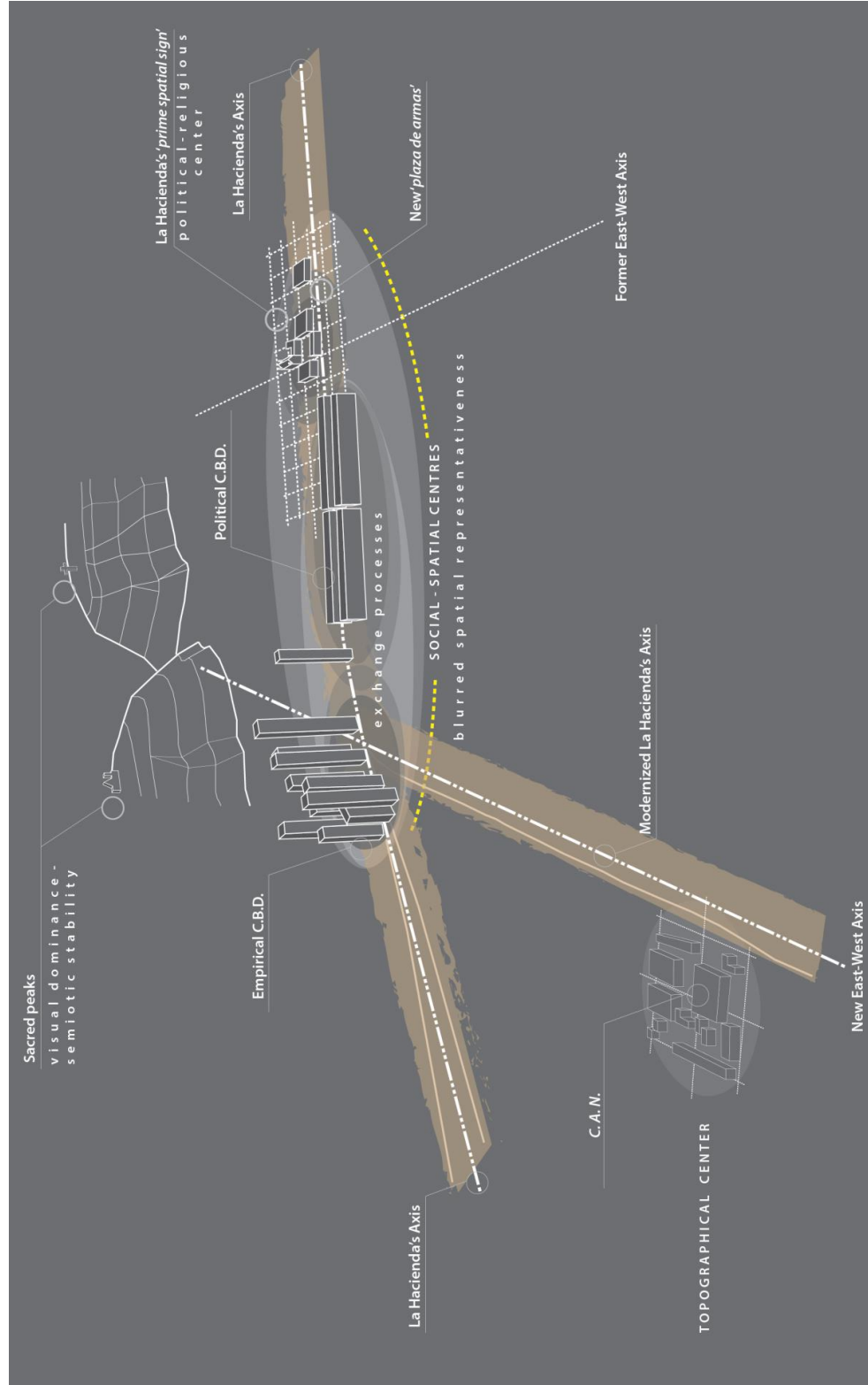
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<sup>182</sup> The 600 metres high peaks marked by catholic signs denote iconically the unquestionable superiority of Christian divinity over other worldly or spiritual spatial referents located on the city's plane.

spatial configuration identified within the Plaza de Bolívar's area with the new presidential palace and *plaza de armas*. Moreover, the location and use of 'monumental verticality' (which historically signifies power and male authority) to represent 'exchange processes' and 'progress' clearly overcomes the spatial hierarchy and representation of other cultural practices e.g. 'knowledge' or 'information'. Universities, libraries, cultural centres or other related institutions were not granted a similar or superior functional or semiotic hierarchy within the city's spatial structure in this period.

- Finally, we observe that in spite of the highly conflictive spatialization of social processes and strategies during the crisis period, the resultant arrangement at the end of the 1970s did open the possibility to spatially represent a different social structure from the pre-modern *La Hacienda*. Key elements such as the new east-west axis permit a future location and hierarchical arrangement of signifiers that might alter the general spatial configuration and meaning of Bogotá's spatial structure. The following figure summarizes the main characteristics of this period.

Fig. 93. Crisis and fragmentation of urban centrality. Diagram



Source: Own elaboration

## 6. Bogotá's current urban centrality configuration

The crisis period of pre-modern urban centrality in Bogotá did not lead to socio-spatial integration. Conversely, Bogotá's current urban centrality configuration (2000s) is characterised by the deepening of 'spatial fragmentation'. This condition of fragmentation responds, on the one hand, to the radicalization of socio-spatial phenomena related to the crisis period (1910s-1970s), and on the other hand, to a particular socio-spatial process that developed from the 1980s onwards. Such process was driven by a gradual shift of the ISI towards a new model of economic liberalisation adjusted to reproduce key power relations inherited from the previous historical periods i.e. those related to the pre-modern *La Hacienda* and its modernised and highly conflicting version of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this sense, Bogotá's current urban centrality configuration presents a particular coexistence of ideal city centre types related to *La Hacienda*'s values and its modernisation strategies as well as to the category of 'post-modern urban centrality'. In the following two sections we address this particular spatial structure. The first characterises the general context of the last moment of urban centrality in Bogotá, and the second approaches the key dimensions and socio-spatial dynamics involved.

### 6.1. The general context: A highly conflicting reconfiguration of the power structure

Drawing on Misas (2002) and Guillén (1979), the ISI appears as a strategy which, successfully applied, turned into a particular 'a-fordist' mode of production. Such mode of production involved two main aspects: first, the enforced maintenance of totalitarian structures linked to the formation of a monopolist system; second, the creation of a "critical fissure" (Guillen, 1979) in the general values of the communitarian associative structure of *La Hacienda*. This introduction of the ISI was achieved through a strong alliance between political and economic elites and the proscription of alternative socio-political organisations. In this sense, the generalization of violence and absence of social consensus appear as main outcomes but also essential components of the overall system.

According to Misas (2002), such 'a-fordist' mode of production relates to a contradictory industrial system. Whilst preventing the development of mass consumption, the system succeeds in creating an accumulation of capital. Accumulation

obtained on the lucrative exports market and a captive internal market composed by a small high income elite, the urban middle class, and a relatively small proletariat who works for the monopolist sector. These profits allow the capitalists to maintain their position in the market and also develop active processes of vertical and horizontal integration. As a result, there is a constant but mediocre growth in which the concentration of power and wealth is connected to low demand and a large mass of population excluded from the outcomes of accumulation.

The strategy against the expansion of the internal market and the subsequent fordist mode of production (Misas, 2002) is oriented by the previous practices of the *capitalismo hacendatario* (Guillén, 1979) e.g. low private investment and permanent state subsidies, and diverse mechanisms of ‘controlled socialization’ aimed to maintain typical power relations inherent to *La Hacienda* e.g. authoritarianism, poly-classist loyalties, etc.<sup>183</sup>

Within this context, a “general dominium of the financial-industrial sector” (Guillén, 1979) was created by the 1970s. During this decade, economic elites became ‘conglomerates’ through the traditional use of political power<sup>184</sup>. The maintenance of typical ISI mechanisms via *La Hacienda*’s politics<sup>185</sup> led to the “consolidation and diversification” (Misas, 2002) of Colombia’s main economic actors in the 1980s. Big companies that handled the drinking or the construction industry (to which we shall return to later) in previous decades started to manage numerous sectors such as banking, finance, aviation, services, trade, broadcasting, television programming, etc. Moreover, the diversification of export products in the 1980s such as petroleum, coal, nickel, flowers, etc. led to the coffee growers’ loss of hierarchy (i.e. the largest generators of foreign exchange) and to the weakening of their historical association to the industrial manufacturing sector.

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<sup>183</sup> Different socio-spatial mechanisms of ‘controlled socialization’ are analysed in chapter five.

<sup>184</sup> As mentioned in previous chapters, the possibility of taking advantage of the state’s apparatus was maintained via authoritarian political figures highly related to *La Hacienda* (particularly, *El Frente Nacional*). Whilst guaranteeing protection and privilege to big economic actors, the political power conceded some social rights to the rest of the population in order to preserve the ‘order’ and legitimate itself. According to Misas (2002: 69), social repression was not effective enough to control the increasing outbreaks of discontent. The state had to develop a strong social interventionism in order to regain legitimacy among the urban and rural masses. For example, between the early 1950s and the 1970s the share of public spending in relation with the GDP is increased by 44%, but in the same period the expenses in education doubled and public works expenses were reduced by more than half.

<sup>185</sup> In addition to the import of redundant machinery paid by the whole nation and protection against potential competition for local manufacturing, there were also considerable development loans that benefited both bankers and big economic players (Misas, 2002: 72).

Thus, at the end of the 1980s a reconfiguration of the power structure can be observed. On the one hand, conglomerates centred in the service sector related to traditional politics and new exporting groups; and on the other hand, the groups who had maintained their manufacturing facilities and the coffee exporters who lost weight on the general economy. It is worth underlying that such reconfiguration occurred without affecting the traditional elite's control of political power (i.e. an essential element of *La Hacienda*) which implied the persistence of 'no-negotiation' practices with organisations of the civil society, unions, etc. This meant an intensification of unresolved historical conflicts (e.g. the lack of access to rural land and the exclusion of alternative forces from the political arena) that acquired diverse expressions during the 1970s and 1980s such as electoral frauds, the formation of new guerrilla movements (e.g. M-19 movement) and paramilitary forces, or the physical extermination of entire alternative political organisations such as the leftist political party *Unión Patriótica*.

The 1980s can be therefore acknowledged as a "transition period" (Misas, 2002) still conditioned by ISI mechanisms and its conflicts. During this decade there is a shift towards a mode of accumulation based on the generation of services at the cost of national industrial manufacturing<sup>186</sup> and the control over essential practices such as spatial planning. This new context of increasing monopolisation of services by the private sector shattered the possibilities of civil society participation which shaped the interests of major economic players. In particular, there was a new interest in the opening of the national economy<sup>187</sup> because the economic conglomerates were no longer centred in industrial manufacturing i.e. a sector subjected to strong and uneven competition in a context of general liberalization. Moreover, the promulgation of the 'Washington Consensus' (1989) became a strong ideological force that deeply influenced state's policies in Latin America<sup>188</sup>. In the case of Colombia, such 'consensus' fitted the interests of economic conglomerates as well as the immediate needs of the state led by the traditional political elites.

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<sup>186</sup> A key aspect that illustrates the transformation as well as the negative effects for industrial manufacturing is that industrial growth rates in Colombia were positive only until the end of the 1970s.

<sup>187</sup> During the 1970s there was a presidential attempt to open the national economy that was strongly rejected not only by economic elites but also by social organizations such as the unions.

<sup>188</sup> The Washington Consensus refers to a set of neoliberal principles e.g. de-regulation, privatization, etc. dictated from U.S.A which was aimed to 'guide' the Latin American nations back to the 'path of growth' at the end of the 1980s when, apart from Colombia, numerous Latin American nations were experiencing a strong recession. Such 'Washington consensus' quickly turned into a recipe in Latin America which, fully applied, guaranteed access to international loans and the consent of organisms such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In reference to the conglomerates, the privatization principles implied in the ‘Washington Consensus’ appeared as an ideal ideological device to access more economic fields. In this sense, Misas (2002: 124ff) points out that at the beginning of the 1990s powerful economic actors agreed with the economic liberalization not because they believed they could increase their exports, but because they were able to access more markets traditionally managed by the state such as telecommunications, public services, energy, infrastructure, etc. i.e. non-tradable goods which are generally excluded from international trade competition. As a result, there was a “transfer” (Misas, 2002) of the monopoly of services originally dominated by the state to huge local economic conglomerates via typical mechanisms of the globalisation process such as privatization of public companies, labour flexibility, deregulation of capital accounts, tariff reductions, etc. Hence, local actors acquired a strong “monopolist power” (Misas, 2002) that is not affected by the presence of new foreign capitals represented by transnational companies which are mostly focused on import of diverse goods such as cars, household electrical appliances, foodstuff, machinery, etc.

With regard to the state, the implementation of economic liberalization in the terms of the ‘Washington Consensus’ opened the possibility to obtain extraordinary loans in a context of great debt. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Colombian state was economically conditioned by two aspects related to *La Hacienda*’s politics and the instrumentalization of the ISI during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: first, low tax revenues due to the upkeep of privileging economic policies; and second, the increment of socio-political commitments in the context of the creation of a new and highly contradictory national constitution in 1991 which, according to Misas (2002) and diverse socio-political sectors, appears as a fundamental sign of the highly conflicting situation of the Colombian society<sup>189</sup>.

However, in spite of the association of great political and economic powers around the issue of economic liberalization, the huge national economic groups could not consolidate as a new “hegemonic fraction,” (Misas, 2002) as coffee growers did in the previous historical period. Moreover, actors situated on the secondary and primary sectors of the economy as well as some influential political players tended to disagree

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<sup>189</sup> The highly violent and authoritarian practices of the 1980s preceded the configuration of a “heterogeneous constituent assembly,” (Misas, 2002) that formulated a national constitution in 1991 which included both, the Washington Consensus’ neoliberal principles as well as a wide range of social and political rights related to the construction of a social democratic order.



with the neoliberal project. Last but not least, the recognition of socio-political rights via the new constitution has been either dismantled or used to legitimate the actions of monopolist groups such as powerful urban developers associated with the financial sector, for example, the supposed realization of meetings to socialize and discuss private run real estate projects<sup>190</sup>. This situation also involves the partial participation of alternative political movements and the timid introduction of democratic mechanisms which has implied further discontents in different sectors of the civil society.

In sum, the dominant scenario is best characterised as a highly conflicting reconfiguration of the general power structure which has implied the ‘fragmentation’ of the historical and authoritarian “bloc in power” (Misas, 2002: 240). This condition is maintained during the 2000s and unfolds along with persistent practices that affect the possibility of creating any consensus and cohesion around fundamental aspects such as the character of the state, the accumulation model, and spatial planning at the local, regional and national levels.

## **6.2. The intensification of spatial fragmentation in Bogotá**

The conflicting reconfiguration of Colombian society’s structure informs the intensification of spatial fragmentation within its main locus of authority: Bogotá. The actualization of centrality, which implies the exercise and representation of power, appears in the case of Bogotá as a rather chaotic process that produces complex spatial configurations that seems illegible. However, if we address urban centrality as the prime phenomenon that links space and power, it is possible to embark into the final ‘decoding’ of Bogotá’s main spatial structure.

In this sense, we identify two highly influential aspects: on the one hand, the increasingly conflictive maintenance of traditional socio-political values and structures; and on the other hand, the emergence of new powerful socio-economic associations which introduce ‘the production of space’ as a fundamental activity of capital accumulation and, in so doing, freeze out potential representations of space of alternate sectors of the civil society and the state (i.e. other representations besides the market forces’ *urban imaging*). These aspects appear as driving forces of two phenomena

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<sup>190</sup> This type of practice used to legitimize huge urban projects emerged during some of the exploratory interviews at the beginning of the research. Promoters and investors are allowed to ‘summon’ a particular group of inhabitants through publicity that only very few people can notice, read or see.

which end up defining Bogotá's spatial structure: first, the absence of alternative urban centrality images within spatial planning processes; and second, the uneven spatialization of commanding functions which develop according to the dominance of new economic powers.

#### **6.2.1. The absence of alternative urban centrality images**

The lack of abstract resources within the last phase of urban centrality affects the representation of 'stated power' and the regulation of 'concentration and de-concentration dynamics' within the city. This absence of alternative images, models, concepts, etc. affects the development of strategies and the tackling of rapid socio-spatial transformations. From our approach it is possible to identify two expressions of this phenomenon that unfold simultaneously: first, the re-spatialization of political power according to pre-modern conventions and the preferences of a reduced political-cultural elite; second, the feeble control over the representation of urban centrality at the metropolitan scale.

The first aspect involves the re-use of a traditional mechanism to achieve hegemony around historical structures within highly conflicting societal conditions. It presupposes the re-introduction of spatial elements and symbolic interpretations which end up reproducing the spatial tendency inherited from the previous period. This tendency mainly consists of the ambiguous spatialization of official institutions within the CAN and the *Plaza de Bolívar's* area. The second is connected to a de-regulation process that is related to the monopolization of urban development with an increasingly empowered private sector which ends up defining strong spatial tendencies and even the entire urban model.

##### **6.2.1.1. The re-spatialization of political power according to pre-modern conventions and the further fragmentary de-concentration of official institutions**

The prime referent in regards to the re-use of traditional spatial strategies is the *Plaza de Bolívar* and its immediate surroundings. The dynamics within this significant space are characterised, as in previous historical moments, by the strong linkage between 'symbolic interpretations' and typical socio-political practices aimed to maintain authoritarian structures. Yet, from the 1980s onwards the adoption of a new normative framework on urban and architectural heritage influenced by international

trends<sup>191</sup> comes into play and (indirectly) reinforce pre-existing internal processes such as the institutionalization of the capacity of the original city centre to faithfully represent “epic and foundational”<sup>192</sup> times and events.

The result of this official ‘interpretation’ of what the centre ‘means’ is the naturalization of conservative urban and architectural heritage discourses, as well as the constant re-construction of spatial signs of power and authority according to noble spatial conventions. By conservative discourses we mean the approaches to the built environment which conceal the space’s “historical character [and therefore] the dynamics of social transformation [that affect] conceptual and perceptual [processes]” (Ramírez, 2004: 173f) such as those that establish the urban or architectural ‘heritage’ of a given society. These discourses and spatial signs are constantly defied and used as instrument to express discontent about socio-political and historical issues, discontent which is commonly generalized in the Colombian context by the media and other actors as ‘vandalism’, ‘ignorance’, etc. For instance, these discourses are defied in the case of the graffiti that are put on over and over again on the ‘historical monuments’ such as the sign of ‘genocidal’ over the statue of the city founder located on a high pedestal nearby the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the former *Plazuela de la Yerba*.

In this context, we define the spatial unit called ‘historic centre’ along with its morphological constituents (squares, streets, etc.) as an “absolute space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 234). This characterisation can be substantiated through the revision of urban policies and spatial interventions developed in the last 30 years. From our perspective, it is worth discussing more in detail two phenomena: the continuous re-construction of the justice court, and the enlargement of the city hall i.e. the *Palacio Liévano*.

The justice court was initially located in the city centre at the foundational east-west axis, and then repeatedly situated at the north edge of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. The building standing at the foundational axis was destroyed during the riot of *El Bogotazo* in 1948 and subsequently rebuilt in the 1960s at the *Plaza de Bolívar* (see fig. 90). The

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<sup>191</sup> Particularly those originated from international movements and events previously mentioned such as the charts of ICOMOS and Venice. The contents of these events and documents have strongly influenced the Colombian legislation. In particular conceptions related to the notion of “material heritage” inform national and local laws. See Bogotá’s Institute of Cultural Heritage web page [www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=1942](http://www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=1942)

<sup>192</sup> These two key ‘signifieds’ are extracted from the decree number 678 of 1994 which regulates the ‘special treatment of historic preservation’ of Bogotá’s ‘historic centre’. See the general regulation at [www.patrimoniocultural.gov.co/patrimonio-material/normativa.html](http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.co/patrimonio-material/normativa.html)

6<sup>th</sup> of November of 1985 this building was occupied by subversive forces (the guerrilla group M-19) and brutally retaken by military forces which led to a holocaust that involved a lot of debris, numerous deaths and missing citizens. A new justice court building was put into operation in the 2000s right on the very spot where the previous building was located. This new building hosts a greater number of official institutions<sup>193</sup>.

Fig. 94. Former and current Justice Court building (1985/2016)



Source: Own elaboration based on *Infobae* and own image archive

Numerous critics have focused the discussion about the new justice court on the inconvenient implementation of historicist (postmodern) architectural discourses and the unskillfulness of the architect in charge of the building's design. However, if we concentrate on the structural interpretation of spatial meanings, it is possible to overcome the reduction of the events related to the new justice court building to an outcome of an architect's bad taste or lack of understanding. In this sense, it is necessary to analyse the issue of the reconstruction of the justice court building as a spatial and socio-political act with a double intention: the 'forgetfulness' of immediate events (i.e. the holocaust), and the maintenance of dominant semiotic features inherent to a long history of maintenance of 'authoritarianism' and its everyday practices.

In regards to 'forgetfulness', Maya (2007) identifies several aspects that presuppose a socio-political interest to erase clues connected to the holocaust and a disregard of claims for historical memory of recent events and the victims. In this sense, Maya mentions several aspects such as the suspicious removal of the debris, the concealment of controversies around the building's conception, and the prevalence of

<sup>193</sup> Besides the Supreme Court, the new building hosts the Constitutional Court, the Council of State and the Superior Council of the Judiciary.

the concepts of ‘fear’ and ‘safety’ over the notions of ‘public’ or ‘memory’ in the design and construction of the new building. In this sense, we question the very act of preserving the colonial feature of concentrating in the same place (i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar*) all state powers according to noble spatial conventions. It is of special interest the fact that for the cultural and political elite during the 1980s and 1990s the ultimate requirement to achieve a successful architectural and urban solution was the accomplishment of a ‘harmonic relationship’ between the new building and the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s context. Drawing on primary sources, this goal was a prerequisite to maintain the historical practice of providing an authentic ‘representative testimony’ of former times which are politically interpreted as the true referents which can only offer “character, personality, and physiognomy to the city”<sup>194</sup>. This approach was promoted by diverse official institutions such as the ministry of public works and transport and the Colombian Architects Society (SCA) was shared by the presidency and its cabinet. For these actors the re-adoption of ‘horizontality’ via the new justice court and the preservation of the former building’s general layout (which implied the maintenance of the square’s original quadrangular form) were fundamental aspects to accomplish ‘harmony’ within the city’s “historic zone”<sup>195</sup>.

In this context, we highlight the particular linkage between the notions of ‘harmony’ and (Colombian) ‘history’ established through the representations of space of privileged actors. This relationship strongly informed the re-construction of the justice court according to the convention of ‘horizontality’ and hence to *La Hacienda*’s spatial code based on the subordinated condition of secular signifiers of power in relation to (vertical) iconic signs of divinity or religiosity (see fig. 39). This semiotic relationship was maintained through the conceptualization, design and carrying out of the enlargement and upgrading of the city hall i.e. the *Palacio Liévano*.

This intervention of the *Palacio Liévano* was called *Edificio Bicentenario* and was developed within the *Plaza the Bolívar*’s western framing block in 2011. The horizontal design of the *Palacio Liévano* was deliberately preserved through the *Edificio Bicentenario*. According to the official reports of the architectural competition, the main symbolic interpretation and goal of the critics, juries and winner designers was

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<sup>194</sup> Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Advise on the reconstruction project of the Justice Court in Bogotá (July 1986, page 2).

<sup>195</sup> Meeting of the National Monuments Council. Project Approval (August 1986, Act Nr. 6, page 3).

the ‘no interruption’ of the ‘spatial reading’ of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. In the context of the competition, this historical central space was interpreted as the very “embodiment [of the] nation, [a] harmonic [space] subjected to ‘respect and exaltation’ via the use of ‘volumetric discretion’”<sup>196</sup>. This ‘discretion’ involved the selection of building materials, the continuance of existing rhythms in the façades, the preservation of the city hall’s arcade (which deliberately resembles framing elements of Spanish *Plazas Mayores*), the conservation of the dimensions of the noble/colonial block border construction but also, and essentially, the predominant ‘horizontality’ of the *Palacio Liévano* in accordance to its neighbouring buildings i.e. the Capitol (south), the new justice court (north) and the religious buildings located next to the cathedral (east)<sup>197</sup>.

Fig. 95. *Edificio Bicentenario* within the *Plaza de Bolívar*. Horizontal arrangement (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

The examination of the cases of the justice court and the city hall suggests two crucial and highly related socio-spatial aspects: first, the maintenance of a strategic intellectual and moral leadership of political and cultural elites; and second, the persistent semiotic instrumentality of the *Plaza de Bolívar* to achieve spatial hegemony around fundamental values that are inherent to *La Hacienda*’s socio-spatial order at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>196</sup> Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C. (2011: 24/55/77).

<sup>197</sup> Reports of the winner designers (TECTUS Ltda.) reveal the spatial deterministic, unhistorical and functionalistic definition of the *Plaza de Bolívar* which is mainly read as an “agglutinating point and generator of development” (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C., 2011: 44). Moreover, it is interesting to see that the rather uncritical approach of TECTUS to the renovation and enlargement of Bogotá’s city hall contrasts to re-signifying contemporary projects (e.g. Norman Foster’s intervention of Berlin’s *Reichstag*) which appear in design and conceptual reports as referents of the winning project. See TECTUS’ analysis of referential projects in Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C. (2011: 41ff).

In reference to elitism and social leadership, it is important to mention the fact that whilst traditional spatial signs and social structures of power were strongly questioned and even physically attacked, dominant actors persisted in avoiding a critical assessment of recent events, existing social relations, and their historical foundations. This conflict between opposing socio-spatial practices and a prevailing interpretation of history (and of its main referents) has a crucial spatial dimension. Just as in the highly violent period of the 1950s when the content and morphology of the core of power was questioned by external consultants, (i.e. Le Corbusier, Wiener, Sert) ruling elites preferred to not disturb *La Hacienda*'s prime signifier at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As we have already seen, this has included the maintenance of the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s framing functions together with the naturalization of the square's spatial aesthetics which embody historical values and practices that are currently at stake e.g. the concentration of power.

When claiming the signified of 'harmony' as the content of the space that 'embodies the nation', those in power create a sense of 'consensus' around the societal structure. This is a consensus which does not exist in reality if we regard the social demands along Colombia's highly violent and confrontational history. From this perspective, the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s spatial complex appears as a potent spatial sign used, on the one hand, to conceal the real contradictions produced by the enforced maintenance of *La Hacienda*'s historical socio-political practices at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (e.g. the strong struggle to upkeep authoritarian forms, poly-classist loyalties or the incontestable catholic supremacy, etc.); and on the other hand, to generalise its pre-modern, 'presentative and representative' character within a context characterised by increasing social struggles and demands for decentralization, secularization, democratization, etc. In other words, a context characterized by a tension towards 'modernisation' which implies a need to transform socio-spatial structural aspects.

Focusing on the 'representative dimension' of *Plaza de Bolívar*'s spatial complex, we observe that the concealment of contradictions and the generalization of semiotic features are mainly achieved via the maintenance and constant re-introduction of 'iconic and indexical' features related to the times controlled by *La Encomienda* and to key values of *La Hacienda*. In this sense, we primarily identify the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s quadrangular shape (i.e. the former *plaza mayor* or *plaza de armas*' basic geometry) as

a creation of royal power appropriated by *La Encomienda*. This space, embedded in the colonial grid, stands as a key iconic feature of the radical socio-spatial homogenization project of the Hispanic colony which in practice has not ever been critically modified. On the contrary, this essential convention of colonial authority has been constantly confirmed by political and cultural elites through the acceptance and rejection of key architectural and urban projects during the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

With regard to architectural interventions, the Capitol constituted a prime referent with its monumental front that kept the original boundaries of the former colonial square. This significant urban feature was maintained within the conflictive origins of the republic in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when different signs and forms of the previous colonial authority were needed by those in power. In the 1920s, when traditional political power was being defied, the original and essential spatial conventions of the Capitol were confirmed and finally materialized<sup>198</sup>. Four significant architectural interventions have obeyed the same spatial principle: the *Galerías Arrubla* building replaced by the existing *Palacio Liévano* built in 1905 and enlarged in 2011, and the already mentioned two justice courts that were erected and reconstructed in the 1960s and the 2000s. In reference to rejected urban interventions, it is worth reminding the re-signifying projects proposed by external consultants within the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Karl Brunner's bourgeois-like *Avenida Central* (1935), and Le Corbusier, Wiener and Sert's reformist *Centro Cívico* (1953)<sup>199</sup>.

At the same time, the fundamental indexical sign of colonial authority has been also constantly validated. We particularly refer to the functional and semiotic reuse of the crossed axes set by the Hispanic royalty which originally organised the crown's main institutions, and indicated the location of an indisputable authority. As previously identified, during the last decades this pre-modern convention has been reintroduced in such a manner that the *Plaza de Bolívar's* complex has been reinforced as a specialised sub-centre of political power where the location of official institutions uncritically followed the spatial logic of the 'imposed authority' that originally created this significant space. In this sense, it is worth reminding the presidential palace enlargement with its new *plaza de armas* and the constant reconstruction of the justice courts, all located at and according to the traditional and historically dominant north-south axis.

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<sup>198</sup> See chapter 5.1.3

<sup>199</sup> See chapters 5.2.2 and 5.2.3



This trend also involves the presence, along the north-south axis, of the Ministries of Finance (1949), Information Technologies and Communications (1941), and of Agriculture. This pattern is significant considering the simultaneous opposing trend that has consisted in the re-location of key governmental institutions within the CAN area. In this regard, the north-south axis appears as an unavoidable indexical sign for those privileged actors involved in the configuration of significant spaces related to the society's representation in space.

In reference to iconicity, it is essential to reflect on the relationship between 'secular horizontality' and 'sacral verticality' within the *Plaza de Bolívar*. As identified in previous chapters, this significant spatial relationship between verticality and horizontality appears as the prime referent of the establishment of the republic in the 19<sup>th</sup> century according to the values of the predominant mode of association i.e. *La Hacienda*. This arrangement, which signifies the unquestionable hierarchy of 'divinity merged with political power', is maintained at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as immutable sign of 'nationhood'. From our perspective this practice reflects the dominant actors' preference for not detaching the meanings of 'republic and democracy' from the idea of 'God', whose vertical representation within the *Plaza de Bolívar* (via the cathedral's façade) was originally used to sacralise and at the same time provide a lower semiotic hierarchy to the main referent of 'worldly interests' and 'democratic equality' i.e. the Capitol. In other words, there is a strong trend to preserve the representation of a "total power" (Lefebvre, 1991) i.e. sacral and secular at the same time that corresponds to two related aspects. On the one hand, the no-transgression of traditional politics within the fragmentation of power described above; and on the other hand, the disregard of evident pressures of change exercised by armed and unarmed social groups of the civil society in the different social, political, economic and cultural fields.

In sum, the representation of power in Bogotá appears as an essential mechanism to achieve 'spatial hegemony' within a deep and sustained crisis. We refer to a 'cultural strategy' to create an impression of stability and harmony around power structures. This strategy has isolated 'geographically' the issues of collective identity within the *Plaza de Bolívar's* spatial complex. The outcome is the concealment of social contradictions and the maintenance of a particular 'spatiality of authoritarianism'. There are two key referents in this regard: on the one hand, the designation of Bogotá's 'historic zone'

with its noble layout as the ‘true [and] only’ referent of Colombia’s socio-spatial order; and on the other hand, the upkeep of *La Plaza de Bolívar*’s established meaning as an absolute “social truth” (Barthes, 1982).

From our perspective, this condition of socio-spatial ‘isolation’ presupposes the restraint of ‘social imagination’, particularly, in the context of the re-exercise of authoritarianism, the protection of elitist forms of interpreting history and the apparent consensus around the redefinition of socio-political values via a new constitution. Such restraint hinders the possibility of creating and applying alternative spatial images to cope with complex socio-spatial transformations. Specifically, there is an absence of ‘urban centrality figures’ within spatial planning practices in Bogotá with the potential to conciliate semiotic and functional problems. We refer to spatial figures that meet both, the need to develop new spatial expressions of collective identity and the numerous requirements of social life under modernisation e.g. functionality of urban space according to processes of specialization of activities, growth, mass mobility, etc.

This absence of images and figures problematizes the tackling of semiotic challenges like the spatialization of ‘state authority’ under growth and highly conflictive modernisation dynamics. Moreover, these images and figures are also needed to address functional aspects of the city such as mobility, transportation, concentration and de-concentration of urban activities, fluxes, etc., particularly, in the context of the fragmentary condition of the city’s spatial structure inherited from the previous period. In this sense, the shortage of images/figures obstructs two aspects: first, the establishment of spatial conventions that organise, in semiotic terms, urban and architectural interventions related to the emergence of socio-political transformations; and second, the possibility to plan a more legible logic of concentration of activities at the metropolitan scale.

This lack of representational resources can be observed in the last phase of urban centrality through the revision of primary sources connected to the development of key state-driven urban projects that were meant to address structural problems of the city. In this regard, the essential referent is the 244ha urban project *Ciudad Salitre* (1987-2000s) that was “inspired” (FIDEICOMISO CIUDAD SALITRE, 1998: 2ff) in the derogated polycentric master plans developed in the 1970s (mainly the *Fase II* - 1972).



This means, in other words, that *Ciudad Salitre* represented a historical chance to address the displacement of Bogotá's spatial structure using unique resources: the CAN's strategic location and the semiotic potential of the functions involved in the project. However, drawing on the project's main official report and on interviews made with two public officials of Bogotá's city planning department, the issue of collective spatial representation or any other semiotic problem were 'disregarded' within the project *Ciudad Salitre*.

This situation appears surprising considering, first, the project's general objective of providing 'spatial interaction' associated with the idea of 'centre' and hence 'symbolism'; second, the project's scope that affected the general configuration of the city's spatial structure; and third, the developing area i.e. the CAN sector which appeared in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century already as a strategic area and a strong locus of decision making activities in the regional and national levels. In this sense, it would be expected that the issue of collective spatial representation (i.e. identity, history, etc.) could have played a major role in the general development of *Ciudad Salitre*.

Nevertheless, the absence of images becomes understandable when considering the general restraint to propose alternative figures of urban centrality described above. Under the structural conditions established at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the issue of the spatial representation of 'signifieds' related to socio-political relations such as 'democracy', 'separation of powers', 'social diversity', 'historical memory', etc. appears somehow 'removed' from the urban and political agendas. The different politicians and spatial planners involved in the conception of the project *Ciudad Salitre* therefore applied a set of mixed-up modern and post-modern functional urban planning principles. Mainly, the generation of mixed uses via specialized/individually conceived architectural typologies, the design of spatial elements to ensure the 'functionality' of the layout in terms of the general mobility of private cars and pedestrians e.g. 'park ways', and the reintroduction of the "block [and the] street," (FIDEICOMISO CIUDAD SALITRE, 1998: 10) as basic spatial units.

Thus, *Ciudad Salitre*'s conception was 'hollowed out' of any socio-historic content from the start and essentially lacked distinguishable figurative resources. This situation impacted the whole development process of the project. The project was

impacted because the primary aim of ‘linking’ spatially the different institutional, commercial and residential land uses with the existent concentration of ‘isolated’ official organisms of the CAN area did not have any guiding image (i.e. an iconic figure/convention) with the potential to grasp the CAN’s past and present in reference to an expected future. In other words, the historical conditions of Colombia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century restrained the emergence of new *materiél* related to Bogotá’s urban centrality. In this manner, key political and cultural aspects of the CAN’s history with the potential to orient the spatial configuration and functioning of *Ciudad Salitre* in relation to the city’s general spatial arrangement were neglected; for example, the 1950s and 1960s ambitions of relocating power, encouraging alternative functional dynamics (primarily, concentric urban development) or introducing new aesthetics within one of Colombia’s most violent and conflicting period which gave birth to today’s armed conflict and its main actors. In this context, the efficient reproduction of standardized complexes prevailed over singularity and representativeness of this central space.

Thus, the spatial outcome of *Ciudad Salitre*’s project within the CAN area is a compilation of juxtaposed spaces ‘cut off’ by the already existing functionalist infrastructure (i.e. motorways) inherited from the previous moment of urban centrality, primarily, the *Calle 26* or Bogotá’s newer east-west axis. There are three juxtaposed spaces:

- 1. The CAN complex itself, created in the 1950s, was uncoordinatedly developed in the subsequent decades. It remained untouched at the end of the intervention of *Ciudad Salitre* and is composed of five ministries, six official institutes, seven national organizations, four facilities of the National University of Colombia, two hospitals, a square dedicated to fallen military within the armed conflict, and a children’s’ home<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> In this sense, the CAN complex is composed by 25 buildings. Ministries: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Mining and Energy, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Social Welfare. Official institutes: an empty building of the national Social Security Institute (ISS), the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), the Colombian Institute of Rural Development (INCODER), National Institute of Road Infrastructure (INVÍAS), National Weapons Manufacturer Headquarters (INDUMIL) and the National Health Institute. Other official organizations: the Superintendence of Corporations, the National Civil Registry Office, the National Maritime Authority, the Higher School of Public Administration, the National Police building, the Superintendence of Industry and Commerce and the Public Media system Headquarters (RTVC). National University Facilities: university hospital, a University housing complex (*Residencias Camilo Torres*), an administrative university building (*Edificio Uriel Gutierrez*) and a research institute (INEA). Hospitals and further facilities: a central hospital mixed with offices of the national police, a children’s clinic and a children’s home (ICBF).

developed under their own logic and separated by independent roads for car transit, parking lots, several football fields, a square, residual green areas, gardens, etc.

Fig. 97. Components and spatial juxtaposition within *Ciudad Salitre* (2015)



Source: Own elaboration based on Google Earth

- 2. The area developed under the name *Ciudad Salitre* which includes discontinuous and juxtaposed specialized spaces for residential, commercial and institutional activities arranged via a layout composed by standardized park ways, avenues and secondary roads which are interrupted by motorway junctions and residual green areas. It includes in its eastern end an agglomeration composed of three national and regional official

institutions (the Office of the Attorney General, the Headquarters of the Government of Cundinamarca and the Courts of Bogotá and Cundinamarca), the US embassy and a couple of commercial buildings developed independently in their own lots and separated by a section of a park way and an avenue, a motorway junction, parking lots and residual green areas used as pedestrian shortcuts. The only relation of this sector of *Ciudad Salitre* to the CAN complex is established by its non-residential use, physical proximity and connection achieved via vehicular and pedestrian bridges.

In addition, it is possible to identify a stripe on the northern edge facing the *Calle 26* composed by vacant lots for future corporative uses, head offices of mayor firms, the headquarters of Bogotá's chamber of commerce, banks and exclusive hotels that is interrupted by a motorway junction, the National Printing Office, a mall, the Office of the Comptroller General of Colombia, the Bogotá's Department of Education building and the headquarters of a public TV channel. The rest of this spatial development is characterised by numerous blocks of heterogeneous and enclosed residential complexes, commercial buildings (e.g. private health services, shops, etc.) a school, a technology museum, a mall, a chapel located in a triangular gap in between two roads, an enclosed area for sport fields, and finally the country's main bus terminal which was built prior to the conception and development of *Ciudad Salitre*.

- 3. The northern border of the *Calle 26* delimited by the CAN complex (east) and the *Carrera 70* (west). It is a very patchy area where several facilities and institutions are located: a National Police Club, an insurance company (*Seguros Bolivar*), offices of the two main newspapers of the country (*El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*), medical services and sport facilities.

Finally, the outcome in terms of the general configuration of central spaces is the perpetuated tension towards the partial de-concentration of official institutions within the CAN area according to isolated/fragmented spatial codes. This means the persistence towards the spatial dislocation of the city's spatial structure (and its social spatial and topographical centres) inherited from the previous period.

#### **6.2.1.2. The feeble control over the representation of urban centrality at the metropolitan scale**

The lack of alternative spatial images is not only related to the maintenance of certain socio-political conditions but also to new forms of socio-economic power. The reconfiguration of the societal structure described above involves new powerful associations that affect the whole decision-making system as well as space production in general during the last decades in Colombia. This situation presupposes the monopolization of urban development with an increasingly empowered private sector which is legitimised by the simultaneous instalment of (de)regulative spatial planning practices.

Drawing on Misas (2002), Saldarriaga (2006) and Cortés (2007), this de-regularization has involved strong material and discursive components. On the one hand, there is an extraordinary accumulation of capital achieved by dominant economic actors via ISI mechanisms that allowed the active vertical and horizontal integration of firms from the 1980s onwards. As mentioned above, this integration has entailed the transfer of key activities originally dominated by the state to economic conglomerates via traditional politics. This includes, besides diverse services such as banking, finance, broadcasting, public services, energy, etc., ‘urban development’ whose products (i.e. non-tradable goods such as roads, buildings, infrastructure, etc.) are excluded from international trade competition and therefore fit the economic conglomerates’ interests under the liberalized economic conditions established from the 1990s onwards. And on the other hand, the re-introduction of the World Bank discourse led in Colombia by the economist Lauchin Currie during the previous period that equalized ‘social development’ to ‘physical/urban growth’.

The discursive component appears as a key dimension of the problem because, under the new power conditions, the maintenance of a representation of space based on the conceptualization of ‘land’ as an unlimited resource, and ‘built space’ as a fundamental means of development and economic growth ends up legitimating the monopolistic control of the private sector over the city. At the institutional level, this required a new arrangement characterised by a merge of ‘savings and housing corporations’ (*Corporaciones de Ahorro y Vivienda*) with huge urban developer firms that were linked to the economic conglomerates. The initial link between these actors



was a financial system called *UPAC* (*Unidades de Poder Adquisitivo Constante*) which entailed two objectives: first, to “encourage money savings based on paying high interest rates and price-level adjustment” (Saldarriaga, 2006); and second, the use of the collected funds on the construction of “new housing, commercial and office space” (Saldarriaga, 2006; Cortés, 2007).

The result therefore was the configuration of a new structure of association which not only influences macro-economic and political issues but also spatial strategies. We refer to a powerful “financier - urban developer bloc” (FDB) which, having huge funds collected via *UPAC* at its disposal, dominates land ownership, spatial planning practices and an active construction process. Particularly, the construction of architectural products to host the vertiginous growth of tertiary activities originated via the new mode of accumulation characterised by the generation of services (monopolized by the private sector) at the cost of national industrial manufacturing and the control of land use dynamics.

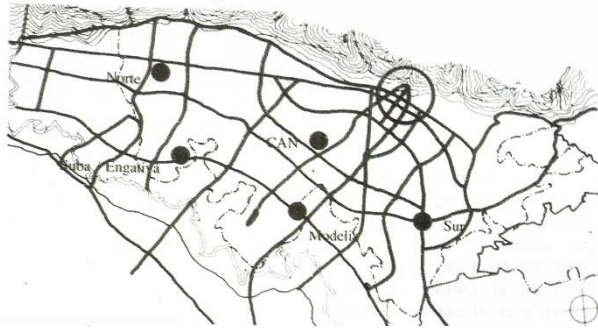
In the case of Bogotá, a few urban developer firms owned most of peripheral land already at the beginning of the 1980s (principally, *Ospinas & Cia*, *Mazuera & Cia*, *Pedro Gómez & Cia*, *Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo & Cia*) and achieved a monopolistic dominance over the city’s spatial development in accordance to a spatial de-regulation process which benefitted their economic interests. Such de-regulative process entails three parts: first, the disarticulation and final derogation of master plans which, even though were conceptually based on the matching of the notions of ‘physical growth’ and ‘development’, focused on the control of land consumption via polycentric development (e.g. *FASE II* – 1972, ‘Cities within the city’ - 1974); second, the establishment of master plans that allow for “flexible interpretation,” (Saldarriaga, 2006; Cortés, 2007) such as the *Acuerdo 7* of 1979 and its “extension,” (Cortés, 2007), the *Acuerdo 6* of 1990<sup>201</sup>. These plans ended up liberalizing land uses as well as the use of urban and architectural typologies. And finally, the development of a highly contradictory normative framework from the 2000s onwards that, in spite of promoting the active role of the state in urban issues ended up maintaining spatial trends encouraged by the previous urban planning strategies set by the *Acuerdos*. Thus, it is possible to recognise an increasing empowered private sector that has not only managed

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<sup>201</sup> The term *Acuerdo* refers in this context to a political agreement made by the city council.

to dominate key material aspects (e.g. the concentration of capital and peripheral lands) but also benefitted from abstract assets such as state-run master plans.

Fig. 98. Polycentric planning: *FASE II* (1972)



Source: FIDEICOMISO CIUDAD SALITRE (1998: 3)

### *Main de-regulative mechanisms*

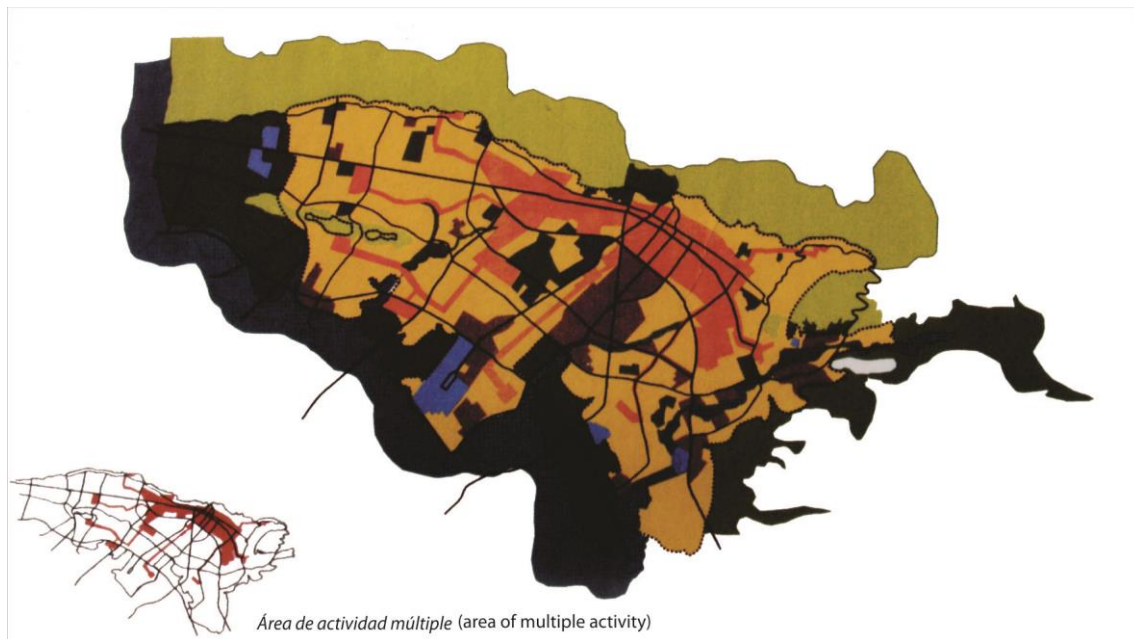
The conception of collective space presupposes the spatial representation of centrality. This conception has been characterised by two simultaneous situations during the last period of urban centrality: first, the preponderance of the hegemonic discourse on the original city centre promoted by the cultural-political elite described above; and second, the oversimplification of the notion of ‘centre’ within the de-regulative process that has informed Bogotá’s (unrestrained) expansion. Thus, whilst public reflection on social history, political and cultural issues is ‘confined’ within the 70ha ‘historic zone’, the spatial conceptions of the FDB (combined with its dominance over the ownership of peripheral lands) have ruled concentration and de-concentration dynamics of the city.

Three aspects connected to official spatial planning have benefitted the unrestraint performance of private developers: initially, the reduction of what the concept of ‘centre’ implies; in addition, the uneven distribution and characterisation of spatial hierarchies; and finally, the disregard of the principle of ‘scarcity of space’ which underlies the phenomenon of urban centrality.

The *Acuerdo 7* (1979) appears as a foundational de-regulative instrument concerning the definition of Bogotá’s spatial structure. Within this master plan, the concept of ‘centre’ was merely defined as an “area of multiple activity,” (Cortés, 2007: 197), and at the same time, the zone destined for tertiary activities was tripled in north-south direction. This description ended up defining an elongated central ‘economic area’

opened to free private investments. However, it also outlined an uneven region in social and spatial terms exposed to the short term ambitions of a few powerful actors who, under the conditions set through the *UPAC*, focused their financial and construction activities on the production of offices, commercial space (mostly, office compounds, malls) and housing for the upper classes within northern city quarters where these social groups had previously settled.

Fig. 99. *Acuerdo 7* (1979)



Source: Departamento Administrativo de Planeación Distrital (DAPD)

This de-regulation has been extended through succeeding subordinated plans to the *Acuerdo 7*. We refer to the *Acuerdo 6* (1990) and the *Plan Centro* (1985) that, according to Cortés (2007) and Jaramillo (2012), was informed by fashionable postmodern theories that promoted free market urban strategies. In regard to the *Plan Centro*, we identify that the main feature that characterises this strategy is the neglect of former polycentric spatial hierarchies (mainly, those proposed within the plan *Fase II*) and consequently the loss of the chance to empower other social sectors and communities located within and in proximity to Bogotá. This characteristic of the *Plan Centro* promoted a spatial tendency towards the development of a spontaneous ‘super-centre’. The configuration of such spatial configuration required the convergence of the *Acuerdo 7* and the *Plan Centro* in reference to the ‘delimitation’ and ‘functionality’ of a single 1708ha central space which was foreseen as a container for ‘multiple activities’

where the state limited itself to apply the traditional symbolic interpretations onto the 70ha 'historic zone' and to encourage short term and punctual urban design interventions. In this context, a notion of 'public space' specifically delineated to attract private investments was installed in the general public opinion through the academy and its link to the political realm. Embellishments via pedestrian zones, lighting, greening, etc. were applied accordingly. Further measures such as considerable tax reductions have accompanied these 'cosmetic' actions in order to augment construction and preserve buildings of 'cultural interest'.

*The contradictory Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial – POT  
and the 'ubiquitous' Centro Metropolitano*

During the 2000s, the monopolist private sector advances and influences urban development whilst Bogotá's official planning maintains representations of space in regard to urban centrality inherited from the above mentioned *Acuerdos* e.g. the development of a single super-centre. This situation occurs despite the increase of socio-spatial complexity, the reach of limits for further physical expansion, and the introduction of a new spatial planning framework. This framework is defined by the planning figure known as *POT - Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial* which initially seeks two key aspects: first to place the state back in the core of decision-making in urban issues; the second, to achieve a "territorial equilibrium" (*POT*, 2004: 5) as a primary aim related to the political concession of social rights agreed through the new constitution of 1991.

These general objectives entail a re-definition of the concept of 'centre' and a characterisation of spatial hierarchies which includes the designation of functions and distribution of different sub-centres. Specifically, the *POT* prefigures a network formed by 21 city-centres hierarchically disposed to create socio-spatial "cohesion [and] balance," (*POT*, 2004: 5) in the long term. However, the honourable purpose related to the achievement of positive socio-spatial transformations appears highly contradictory when analysing expert interviews and more specific contents of the *POT* and its supplementary reports e.g. the *Documento Técnico de Soporte – DTS*.

To begin with, the network of city-centres is defined as a "socio-economic structure" (*POT*: 2004: 18) meant to generate equilibrium but in the sense of providing a "balanced distribution and offer of goods and services [and therefore] the economic

development [of] all the inhabitants of Bogotá and its region” (*POT*, 2004: 17f). This representation of space reveals the persistent official reduction of urban centrality to a mere economic and functional issue which preserves former oversimplifying approaches to urban space (e.g. the spatial concepts installed via the *Acuerdo 7* of 1979) which benefitted the unrestrained performance of dominant private urban developers. Particularly, this representation of space connotes, from the very start, the city’s structure as a device to facilitate consumption instead of signifying it as an instrument to balance politically, socially, culturally and economically a territory which is officially acknowledged as a highly “segregated” (*POT*, 2004: 5/28) socio-spatial entity. Concrete expressions of this issue are, for instance, the absence of policies to direct a political decentralization (which could empower diverse actors and integrate them into urban development dynamics), and the legitimation of the spreading out of malls (built by the FDB) which increasingly function as spatial referents within the territory<sup>202</sup>. In addition, the approach to ‘spatial equilibrium’ and ‘equity’ made from the concept of urban centrality does not really promote transforming actions towards the so-called ‘balancing’ of the territory. On the contrary, further concepts related to the general functions of the 21 city-centres structure proposed through the *POT* reveal that the true political will is to maintain uneven spatial tendencies and hierarchies produced within the de-regulative process installed from the 1980s onwards.

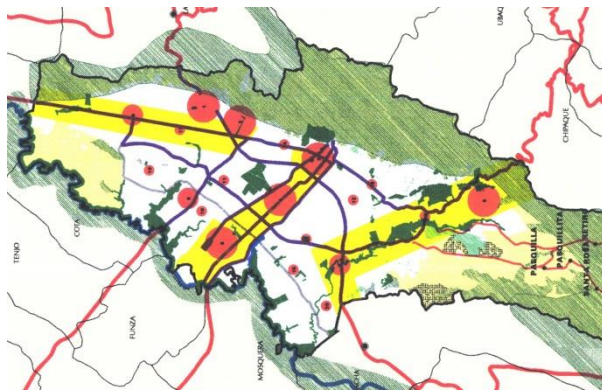
In this regard, it is worth pointing out that despite the political recognition of the existence of strong socio-spatial ‘segregation’ as a negative aspect, the *POT* is used to neglect the pre-existing polarized and segregated condition of the city. This situation can be observed by analysing the main objectives concerning urban centrality. According to the *POT*, the primary aim in reference to Bogotá’s arrangement of central spaces is to “reinforce and consolidate [functionally and spatially] the existent central areas” (*POT*, 2004: 22), yet overlooking the fact that the character and location of those nodes define the very spatial segregation and polarization of the city. Hence, instead of promoting the re-configuration of spatial hierarchies in order to transform ‘a highly polarized and segregated territory’, the official procedure is to focus investments and spatial improvements on the (unevenly distributed and configured) main existent central areas and to encourage new sub-centres - in a hierarchical relation to them.

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<sup>202</sup> A further description and discussion of this aspect will be developed further below.

An eloquent expression of this situation is the initial identification and characterisation of existent and proposed city-centres. Initially, the *POT* establishes the hierarchy of the 21 city-centres spatial structure in terms of the international, national, regional and urban “integrative potential” (*POT*, 2004: 23ff) of each node. However, just three of the 21 city-centres identified are planned, and only one of these three cores is projected as a space of ‘international’ integrative capacity in *Usme* which is located in the southern border of the city. This means that, according to this spatial arrangement, the new southern core is supposed ‘to complement’ the five existing ‘international city-centres’ located in the distant centre-north area of Bogotá where most of the labour market is located and all decision-making places are concentrated.

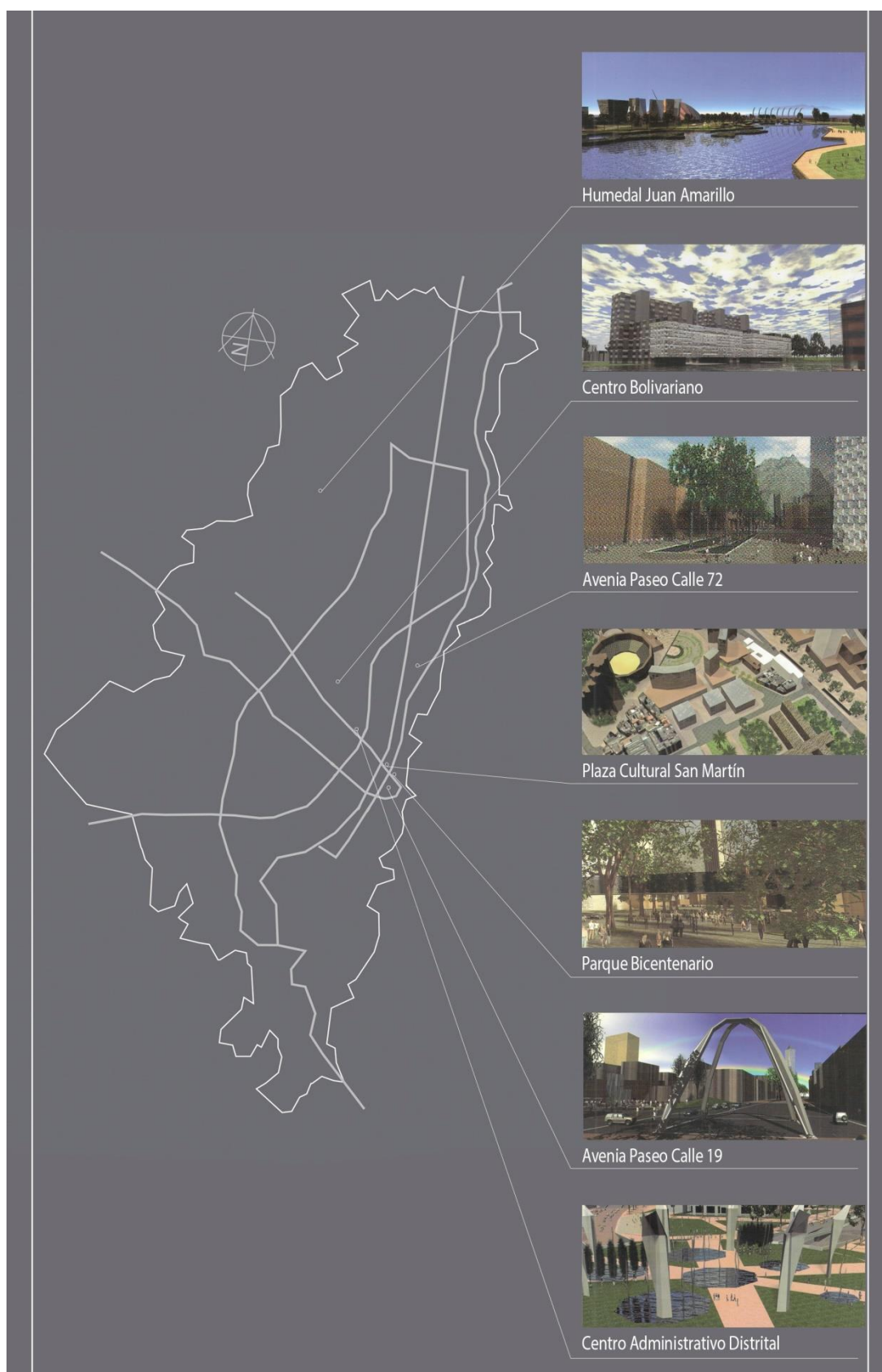
Fig. 100. Spatial planning general strategy (2004)



Source: Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá

Furthermore, there are no details about planning mechanisms to make *Usme* a scarce space for the location of high-rank or commanding political and economic activities such as those concentrated in the centre-north region of Bogotá. This is a significant gap considering that the distant south edge of the city has been a historically excluded, and segregated area that would require a decisive concentration of political and economic capital in order to empower *Usme*’s inhabitants and transform this area into a decision-making core. Actually, there is only a brief reference (with vague terminology) to the will of promoting land uses of local and regional impact along an existing highway that links Bogotá to its southern regions; particularly, ‘balanced housing’ and economic activities in the secondary sector.

Fig. 101. Location of the official seven strategic places in 2009



Source: Own elaboration. Based on Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C. Image Project – 7 strategic places for Bogotá. Calendar 2009



Thus, the setting out of this ‘balancing strategy’ is highly doubtful. The functional description neither fits the initial goal of creating a city centre of ‘international integrative potential’ (which presupposes the presence of high rank political and economic activities) nor presents a spatial planning scheme to accommodate and to symbolize such commanding activities. Moreover, *Usme* does not appear within the city administration’s selection of ‘strategic places’ and interventions to be developed under the guidance of the Master Plan *POT* (see figure below). The seven strategic places in 2009 are located within Bogotá’s centre-north area and characterised by the planning department as the spots of public priority subjected to symbolic enhancement<sup>203</sup>. Last but not least, not even the idea of running an intervention of local/urban impact in *Usme* has come to the attention of the national and local governments within the setting out of the polycentric structure of Bogotá.

Resultantly, a high rank public officer of the planning department argues that in spite of having at the city’s disposal the economic and political capital (i.e. about 30 million USD and a leftist city administration) as well as technical studies developed by local and international organisms (the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Development - CIDER and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy), the project *Nuevo Usme* (a strategic mixed-use intervention to create a sub-centre of urban/local integrative potential) has been disregarded and has encountered social barriers within the planning department. According to the public officer, there is a historical debt to be settled but a recurrent stance of different public officers of the planning department is that the development of that kind of urban interventions means ‘burying money in the poor’.

Nevertheless, the problem of the lack of real mechanisms to generate scarcity of space (hence spatial concentration) goes beyond the planning of particular nodes such as *Usme*. It principally involves the whole polycentric strategy set out through the *POT* which delineates and characterises two general types of city centre. A main central space identified as the *Centro Metropolitano* composed of a *Ciudad Central* and an *Eje*

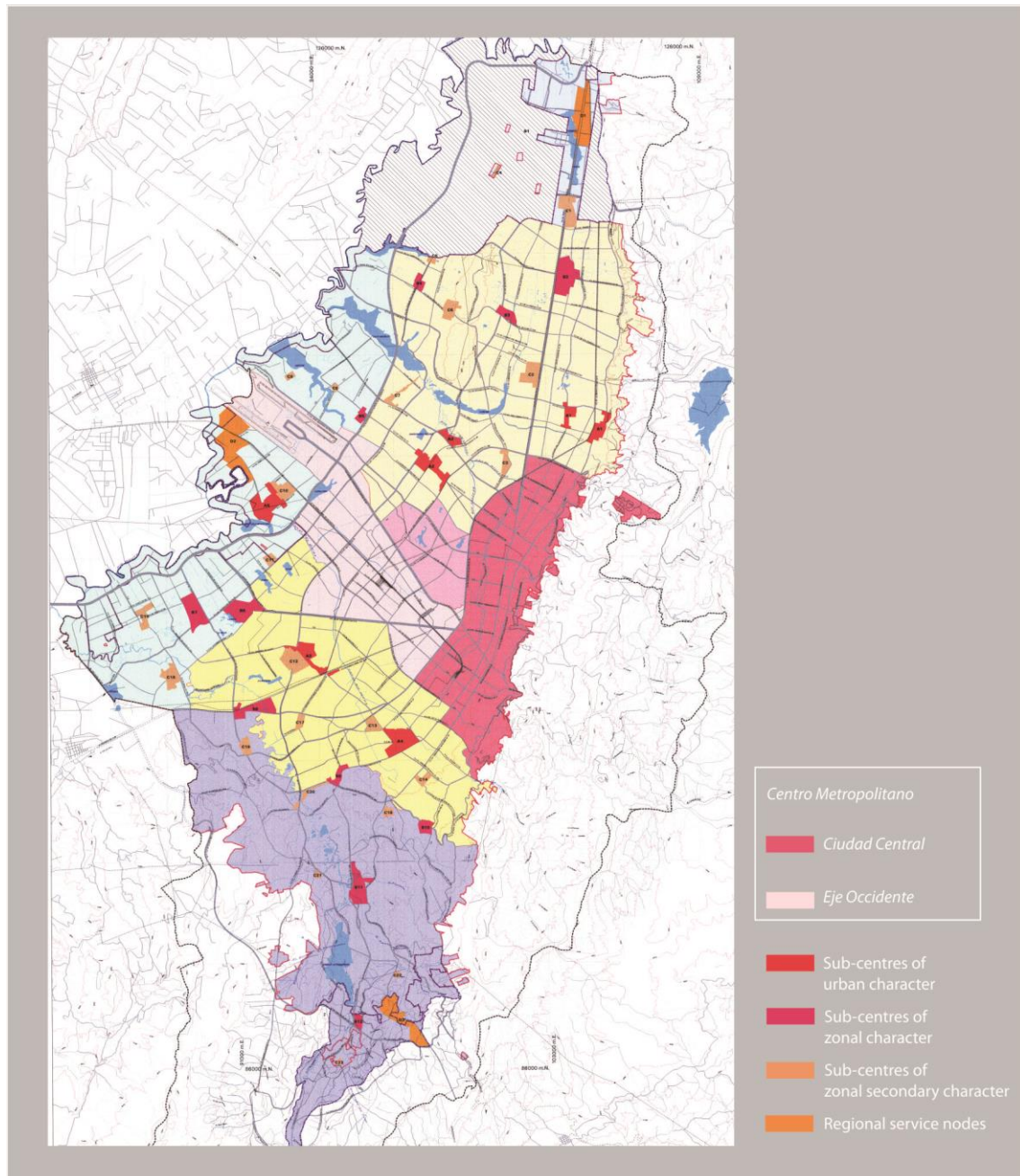
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<sup>203</sup> The projects of the selected places are: *Plaza cultural San Martín* and *Parque Bicentenario* located within the *Centro Internacional*; *Centro Administrativo Distrital* and *Centro Bolivariano* projected within the CAN area; *Humedal Juan Amarillo* planned within Bogotá’s north-west area which is increasingly characterised by upper class residential complexes; *Avenida Paseo Calle 19* located in between the original city centre and the *Centro Internacional*; and finally, the *Avenida Paseo Calle 72* projected within a new C.B.D located in Bogotá’s northern city districts.



*Occidente*, and numerous sub-centres of four different categories: urban, zonal, zonal of secondary character and regional service nodes.

Fig. 102. “Centrality areas” (2004)



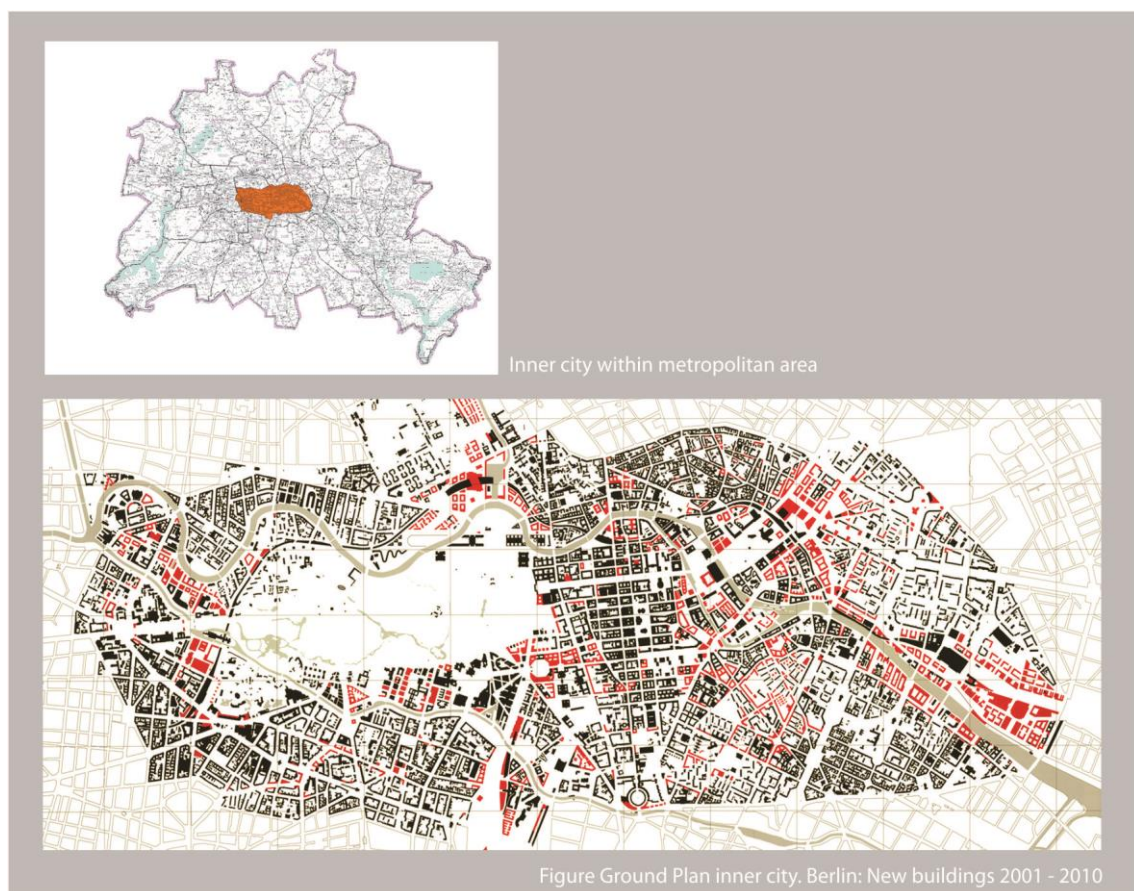
Source: Own elaboration based on Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá

Let us focus on the first type of city-centre. The category *Centro Metropolitano* refers to a super-centre of about 8700 ha which, drawing on official plans and figures, represents approximately the 18% of the city’s total area. This means that the area disposed for central functions within the *Plan Centro* increased in approximately 500%

through the *POT* whilst subsidies or official policies that encourage public and private investments via urban renewal strategies, central housing, etc. do not present such enormous growth and impetus.

A first approach to this situation tells us that an equal proportion between, on the one side, the designated central area, and on the other side, the investment of public and private capitals appears unmanageable in the short, middle and long terms; particularly in comparison with similar strategies in cities of central economies which have a greater amount and more stable resources.

Fig. 103. Berlin's re-centring strategy



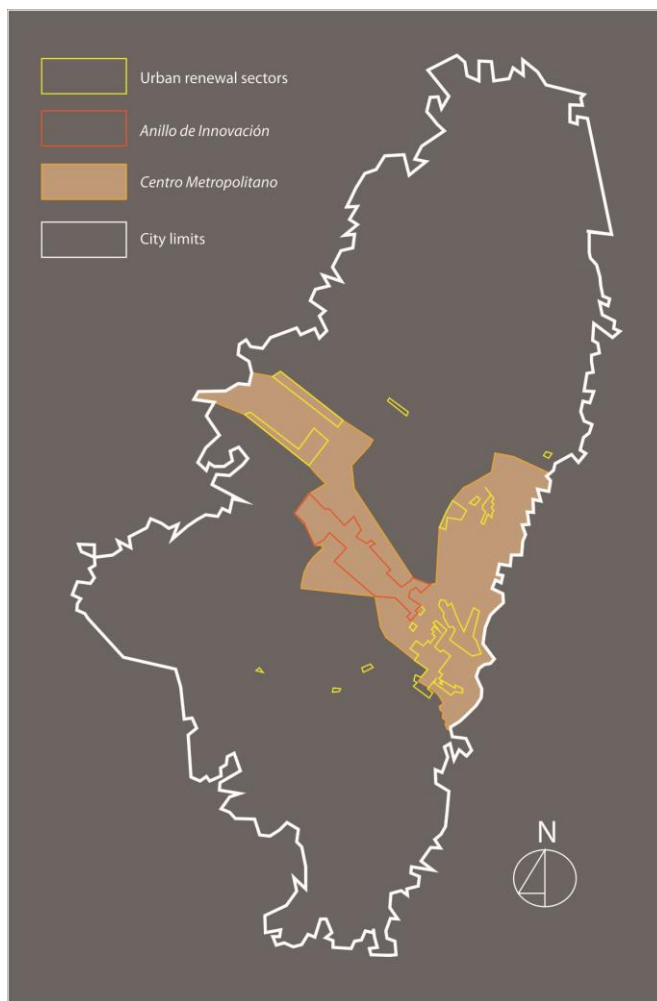
Source: Jiménez (2007) based on Klaus Hartung

The case of Berlin's *innerstadt* provides a good example in this regard. After the reunification Berlin's re-centring strategies included the configuration of an approximately 3000ha main central space whose different sectors were heavily affected by war destruction and then by mass demolitions to accommodate modernist spatial arrangements which, according to the city image established during the 1990s, affected

density rates in the centre of the city. This envisioned central space represented only the 3% of the city's total area and has been subjected to sustained subsidies for decades to achieve the idea of “the inner city as residential area” (Jiménez, 2007). In this regard, the basic precondition of the (social) creation of scarcity of space to achieve centrality seems to be at least considered as a first step towards the accomplishment of different forms of socio-spatial concentration in the German case.

On the contrary, Bogotá's master plan *POT* delineates a vast space (18% of the city's total area) in which the designated areas for urban renewal projects appear insignificant particularly, when considering the proportion of urban renewal sectors vs. the total area of the *Centro Metropolitano* that includes large sections of underused and deteriorated spaces e.g. the former industrial areas developed during the ISI period.

Fig. 104. Bogotá's contradictory spatial concentration strategy



Source: Own elaboration based on Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá (2004)

The problem of generating scarcity of space becomes even more critical when assessing the inclusion of certain areas within the *Centro Metropolitano*. Drawing on Saldarriaga (2006: 308f), official documents of the *POT* (2004: 22ff) and interviews made in 2009/2010 to public officers of the planning department, a key official goal during the 2000s was to strengthen the *citybildung* tendency towards west along the current east-west axis (*Calle 26*) through urban renewal projects and ‘strategic interventions’ (e.g. the *Anillo de Innovación*) in order to prevent the further expansion of central functions within northern city areas. However, the administration also included in the *Centro Metropolitano* northern city quarters where high rank services e.g. finance market nodes, exclusive facilities, etc. have been accommodated since the 1980s (at the cost of former sub-centres such as the *Carrera Décima* i.e. the ISI’s main political-C.B.D) and the interests of dominant urban developers are already focused.

This contradictory measure that supports the investment of private and public resources on deteriorated central spaces and at the same time on bustling outlying areas responds to two aspects: on the one hand, the simultaneous validity of opposing urban planning practices and representations of space; and on the other hand, the actual influence of powerful private actors who have urban planning instruments at their disposal that fit their short term interests.

In regard to the first aspect, we identify the disregard of general conceptions established through national laws and local planning tools (e.g. the decree 388 of 1997 or Bogotá’s *POT*) by city planning officials within their daily practices. Particularly, the principle that conceptualizes the state as the trendsetter for urban development and as responsible for the ‘balancing’ of the territory is constantly denied when analysing public officers’ spatial discourses. Numerous high rank representatives acknowledge ‘market’ or ‘historical’ spatial trends as ‘normal’, hence ‘impossible to counteract’ or to ‘confront’. In this sense, there is a sort of agreement around the idea that the role of the public sector must be limited to the inspection of the implementation of quantitative aspects such as indexes of land use or of assigned areas for public space proposed by private developers. According to a planning director in charge of the promotion and validation of *Planes Parciales*<sup>204</sup>, qualitative aspects like the structuring, location, characterisation or design of public spaces is entirely ‘subjective’ and should be left on

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<sup>204</sup> This term refers to major and strategic urban projects which surpass 10ha.

the entire management of private developers who, she adds, have developed the city for decades and therefore ‘know more’ about planning and design than any public officer<sup>205</sup>.

Accordingly, a general posture of different officials concerning the potential actions of the state within areas of interest of big capitals such as Bogotá’s northern areas is needed to support the ‘consolidation of spaces’. This is achieved by making areas ‘more accessible’ by providing the means for the construction of new roads, sidewalks, greening, etc. or by allowing the development of high impact projects e.g. office space, shopping facilities, housing compounds etc.

Thus, the conceptions of the public sector end up converging with socio-spatial trends shaped by the interests of dominant actors of the private sector despite of the legal/constitutional definition of the state as ‘director’ of the spatial planning agenda. These actors are principally great landowners, major urban developers and medium size firms who, associated through powerful organisations such as CAMACOL<sup>206</sup>, constantly demand the displacement of urban limits to develop their projects<sup>207</sup>.

It is in this context that the delineation of the *Centro Metropolitano* enters in a strong contradiction. The outline of this *Centro Metropolitano* does not presuppose the principle of scarcity (inherent to ‘centrality’) and responds to economic actors/interests that require the flexibility of urban limits to reproduce. Within these structural conditions, the configuration of a limited central region according to a legible logic of accumulation (whether linear or concentric) that facilitates planning processes (e.g. transport infrastructure, main public space interventions, etc.) seems implausible. What is possible to identify is a *Centro Metropolitano* that extends towards north and therefore appears more as a ‘spreading stain’ or malleable space than as a definite and

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<sup>205</sup> The public officer exposed these ideas just after she took the position of director of *Planes Parciales*. In particular, she was worried about the fact that many private developers were complaining about the intervention of public officers in the general configuration of the projects. According to her, this was interfering with the fluent development of real estate dynamics and therefore had to be ‘addressed’ as soon as possible.

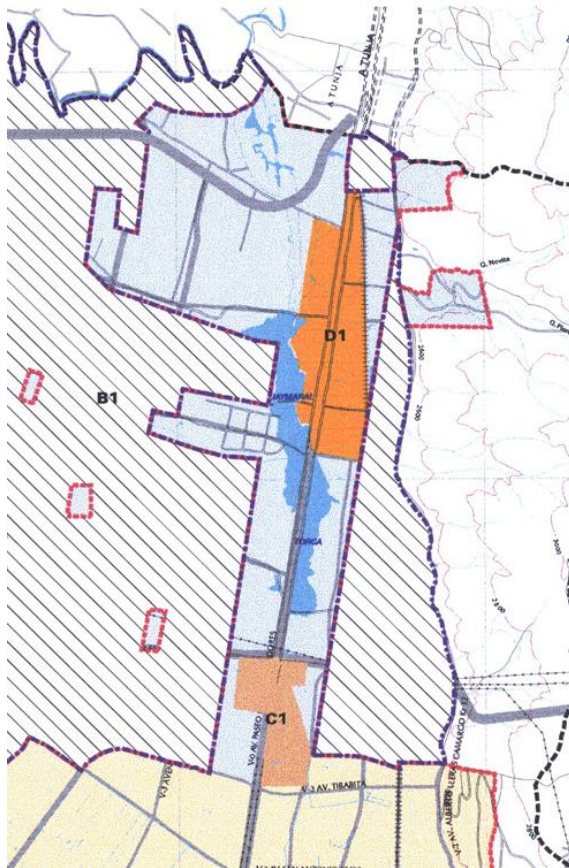
<sup>206</sup> Colombian Chamber of Construction – *Cámara Colombiana de la Construcción*.

<sup>207</sup> This is a common practice underlined by the director of *Planes Parciales* that can be confirmed by revising numerous articles of influencing media such as the journal *Portafolio.co* which constantly exposes the point of view of powerful firms and developers such as Pedro Gómez & Cía (see for instance the article of Portafolio.co about ‘lack of land’ in Bogotá published 08-09-2011). Interestingly, the expert evaded during the interview the contradiction between, on the one side, the idea of supporting the private sector’s initiative as a mechanism to make real estate dynamics ‘fluent’, and on the other side, the apparently ‘negative’ practice of pressuring the city administration to modify city limits in order to make room for their projects.



hierarchical area. This spreading stain presents two development fronts: the first goes towards west and is conceived as a strategy of the public sector; the second goes in north direction and fits best the expectations of dominant urban developers and financiers (see figures above). As a result, there is a delineation of a central area that reflects the conflict between the state's intentions to locate lineally high rank functions in east-west direction and the simultaneous official support to the urban growth model defined by dominant private actors during the last 30 years.

Fig. 105. Northern city borders, green reserve and planned sub-centres as 'city gate'



Source: Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá (2004)

We therefore observe a combination of public and private representations of urban centrality. Yet, the actuality of the private sector's capacity to shape and intervene decisively in planning processes is also evident. This can be observed analysing further struggles around the delimitation of the *Centro Metropolitano* which involves the use of urban planning instruments that fit the reproduction of landownership patterns and the logic of accumulation of capital installed from the 1980s onwards. The case of the *Plan*

*Zonal del Norte*<sup>208</sup> (2010) - *PZN* appears as an eloquent example in this regard. At first, the *PZN* appears as an instrument articulated to the *POT* meant to encourage the development of a sub-centre of ‘regional integrative potential’ in accordance to the proposed urban centrality structure. This meant the development of a central space located within the northern border of the city and clearly detached from the *Centro Metropolitano*. Within a highly conflicting definition of land uses, public environmental organisms such as the CAR<sup>209</sup> intervened in the definition of urban borders in order to protect valued habitats and rural areas which are of particular environmental value in the whole region. The outcome was the delimitation of a sort of linear sub-centre framed by a green reserve which was conceptualized as a “gate to the city” (*PZN*, 2010: 6) and binding node of Bogotá with its northern regions.

Nevertheless, according to public officers of the planning department this spatial scheme was highly questioned by private actors as well as planning officials who saw these conditions as great limitations. The reasons were that, in contrast to *Usme*, the northern sector of the city already included high rank services and infrastructure (mainly, a small airport, sprawled logistic areas and office space). This characterisation included the presence of high income groups (which could live in proximity to potential working places) and the interests of big capitals and landowners to ‘develop’ this area.

Hence, the public officers interpreted that this northern peripheral area had to be subjected to ‘consolidation’ instead of ‘restriction’ and that it truly had a greater potential ‘to structure more’<sup>210</sup> the city. Therefore, according to official documents of the *PZN* and a public officer involved in the definition of the urban plan, it was possible to allow high rank metropolitan services within its boundaries i.e. those functions only allowed within the huge, and apparently, ‘ubiquitous’ *Centro Metropolitano*. Additionally, the sub-centre’s boundaries appeared also as a problem and therefore the further struggles between private and public actors required a stronger intervention of the Ministry of Environment. The result was the substantial expansion of areas destined for urban development; particularly, big lots owned by influential urban developers and financiers such as *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* and *Capitalizadora Colpatria* were included within the new urban limits.

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<sup>208</sup> This term refers to a sort of sectorial plan for Bogotá’s northern areas.

<sup>209</sup> CAR - *Corporación Autónoma Regional de Cundinamarca*

<sup>210</sup> This term is a literal translation of the interviewee’s narration.

Consequently, what was supposed to be a linear configuration of central functions bordered by a valuable landscape did blur. The *PZN* became a layout of wide roads and, ironically called, ‘environmental elements’ (green corridors) that defined a patchy area composed by different lots to be built up independently by each private developer who, in most of the cases, is also the landowner. According to the law, each patch ought to be developed via the figure known as *Plan Parcial* mentioned above since these areas surpassed the 10ha and therefore had to fulfil a set of indexes or numbers concerning mixed uses which include a wide range of functions such as commerce, housing, public spaces, etc. Yet, as previously stated, the configuration and structuring of each *plan parcial* is left to the unrestricted spatial interpretations of the private developers who proposed urban projects such as the 95 ha *plan parcial Mavaia-Lucerna* (2007-2008) within the *PZN*.

Fig. 106. Northern ‘expansion’ of the *Centro Metropolitano*



Source: Own elaboration based on Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá and Fernando Mazuera y Cía / HOK Planning Group (2008)



The traditional local developer/landowner *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* and the international office HOK Planning Group developed two tasks in order to propose *Mavaia-Lucerna*: on the one hand, they interpreted the spatial and symbolic needs implied by Colombia's economic model, and on the other hand, they valued the functional demands of the project's surroundings. The result was the idea of developing a much 'closer' and 'more accessible' *nueva centralidad financiera*<sup>211</sup> that could meet the needs created from the economic model based on 'free trade'. This need-demand approach included the upcoming adoption of economic treaties, the consequent arrival of 'great transnational corporations' which demand 'high standard office space, and finally, the demographic growth of Bogotá's northern neighbouring towns such as Chia or Zipaquirá.

Fig. 107. Sub-urbanization within Bogotá's northern periphery (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

At this point of the definition process of the PZN, there were public officials who were involved in the approval of the project. One of these officials endorsed the approach of *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* and the international office HOK Planning Group by pointing out for whom the new *centralidad financiera* ought to be closer and more accessible. According to him, the people who live and will reside in those areas require optimal and special conditions to develop their 'creativity', particularly, the green landscape of Bogotá's northern periphery which is of their particular 'taste'. The public officer refers to the about, "5,500 high income inhabitants" (PZN, 2010: 47) that have chosen to reside within the northern limits of Bogotá and a few more who live in

<sup>211</sup> That is new financial sub-centre or district. See in primary sources: Fernando Mazuera y Cía; HOK Planning Group (2008). PLAN PARCIAL MAVAI – LUCERNA. Memoria Descriptiva. Bogotá.

suburban mansions at the top of neighbouring hills or in gated communities located in nearby towns i.e. more or less the 0.09 % of Bogotá's population.

In other words, the project is about the conception of a 'custom-made C.B.D' located approximately 8 km away from the northern border of the *Centro Metropolitano* which is specifically located and configured for this small sector of the population and the upcoming residents who are supposed to reside in very low density residential spaces which already characterise the area, or perhaps, in the fancy towers projected within urban projects such as *Mavaia-Lucerna*.

Thus, the representations of space promoted by the few members of the FDB prevail and end up breaking any urban centrality characterisation defined by the supposed empowered public sector that is pictured in the headlines of the *POT*. Apparently, no delimitation of sub-centres made by the public sector fits the expectations of the true architects of the city and its prevailing image; not even when the state delineates a super-centre which paradoxically extends as a 'spreading stain' to satisfy the ambitions of dominant actors that rule real estate market dynamics.

This means that the power relations established within this period limits 'the public' to imagine and establish any alternative urban centrality figure to regulate in semiotic and functional terms the organisation of main collective activities (i.e. exchange, power, knowledge/information, etc.) and their spatial referents according to the new socio-spatial conditions at the metropolitan scale. Instead, the state's or public sector's representation of space remains as the uncritical maintenance of pre-modern spatial signs (i.e. those connected to the order of *La Hacienda*) which is 'isolated' from the general functional performance of the city. In the process, a feeble proposition of spatial hierarchies and delimitations of the different sub-centres neither includes basic urban centrality principles (e.g. the creation of space scarcity) nor regulates the actions of the powerful FDB that ends up imposing the city's spatial model. In sum, it is possible to identify an absence of a public, open reflection regarding the city's spatial structure and a sort of 'simulation' of the existence of internal and external urban borders e.g. the borders of the *Centro Metropolitano* and the limits of the urban area.

### 6.2.2. The final configuration of a ‘fragmented super-centre’

The reconfiguration of power structures within the establishing of spatial de-regulation produced an adjustment of Bogotá’s main spatial structure. In this regard, the last moment of urban centrality in Bogotá has to be seen from the interrelation of two situations: first, the strong alteration of the overall ‘value’ of Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration inherited from the previous period; and second, the opening to the limitless representations of space and appropriation practices of leading actors within the space production process.

In reference to the first aspect, each element of the fragmented spatial structure ‘entered’ the new space production process (dominated by the FDB) differently. We mean that each component of the spatial structure i.e. sub-centres, urban axes, layouts, etc. was ‘valued’ according to diverse socio-spatial conditions. On the one hand, the two aspects already discussed: (1) the orthodox spatial representation of the city’s traditional urban centrality maintained by the cultural-political elite, (2) and the feeble control over (de)concentration dynamics installed via several master plans; and on the other hand, the diverse spatial characteristics of each node of the structure which appear as *material* treated differently by the different leading actors involved in the (re)configuration of urban space.

Conversely, the second aspect refers to the utilization of further socio-spatial arrangements produced during the preceding phase such as elite residential quarters, extended motorway networks over rural or sub-urban areas, etc. by the FDB. Within the de-regulation of urban planning practices and strategies described above (mainly, the ‘ubiquitous’ or ever-expanding super-centre), such arrangements became a terrain for the free display of the urban and architectural preferences of the FDB which are the new dominant ‘association’ and ‘trendsetter’ that decides over the spatial organisation of primary collective activities.

According to these points we distinguish two related re-defining components of Bogotá’s latest spatial structure highly characterised by the presence of a ‘fragmented super-centre’: the partial use of inherited sub-centres by dominant space producers, and the sprawling and merging process of new ‘empirical-C.B.Ds’ within strategic areas.

### 6.2.2.1. The partial use of inherited sub-centres by dominant space producers

As described above, key spatial characteristics of the original city centre area were kept according to the conflictive maintenance of traditional socio-political values and their related spatial images. We referred to the re-application, at the beginnings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, of spatial strategies similar to those of the 1950s that were characterised by a critical ‘restoration of authority’. This situation involves the preservation of significant spatial configurations inherent to *La Hacienda*’s order and the construction of hegemony around historical forms of power. Particularly, the main institutions and representational values of the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s spatial arrangement seem functional to those in power and therefore are re-introduced within the last phase of urban centrality. Thus, at the end of the 2000s it is possible to observe within the original city centre a neat conservation of key official institutions arranged according to a particular ‘spatiality of authoritarianism’ which appears constantly militarized.

Fig. 108. *Plaza de Bolívar*’s spatial complex and militarization (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

However, the methodical maintenance of this central area by elite groups stands as an exception. Other sub-centres created through the political influence of dominant groups in the previous period of urban centrality such as the political-C.B.D are not kept as ‘neat and functional’ as the political core of *La Hacienda*. According to our analysis,

these sub-centres are deeply affected under the productive and regulative conditions installed from the 1980s onwards. Such affectation has mainly to do with the construct of 'central space' as a concept referring to an abundant resource to achieve capital accumulation. This condition around 'urban centrality' alters the location patterns of key real estate investments such as high standard commercial and office space facilities which are mostly developed by members of the FDB who dominate landownership, financial and construction activities. Under this socio-political, economic and interpretative framework of space, those investments do not have necessarily to respond to the logics of spatial accumulation established through the sub-centres inherited from the previous period such as the crossroad of the *Avenida Jiménez/Carrera Séptima*, the linear political-C.B.D (or *Carrera Décima*) or the vertical *Centro Internacional*. As a result, the character and spatial hierarchy of those sub-centres shifted. This is a phenomenon mainly expressed through the partial use of such spaces by dominant actors and the configuration of strong urban cores elsewhere within the urban area.

*The political-C.B.D as referent of the ISI's peak point and decline*

A key referent concerning the shift of spatial character and hierarchy is the *Carrera Décima* or, as we identify it, Bogotá's 'political-C.B.D'. The linear development towards south and the architectural configuration of this sub-centre were interrupted from the end of the 1970s onwards which is when the social relations of production at the national level and spatial planning processes in Bogotá started to be significantly adjusted. The figures shown below illustrate a discontinued linear arrangement of office and commercial buildings that has not been architecturally renewed in the last three decades. These observations coincide with recent numbers provided by the Colombian Chamber of Construction (CAMACOL) and Jaramillo's (2012: 93) calculations which reveal that the construction of new office and commercial space diminished radically within Bogotá's original city centre area (i.e. where the political-C.B.D is located) from the 1980s onwards. In 1987 31% of new office space was built within this central area and by 2005 the total percentage reduced to 0%.

In this context, it is of special interest the general condition and current use of the representative buildings that frame the political-C.B.D's central avenue. For instance, the last 'headquarters' built within this sub-centre was the *Colseguros* tower finished in 1974. It stood as the seat of the national insurance company (essential during

the ISI period) but only for a few years. Already in 1986, a new 30 storey tower was built within the *Centro Internacional* to host the company's head office which in 2002 became the 'Allianz tower' since the company *Colseguros* was sold in its totality to this foreign economic group. At the end of the 2000s the original tower located at the political-C.B.D is used as the main office of the Comptroller General of the Republic and presents, according to official reports, a high degree of deterioration in spite of its condition as head office of a high rank institution and as "national cultural heritage"<sup>212</sup>.

Fig. 109. Central and southern sections of political-C.B.D (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

A comparable situation can be observed in regard to the spatial dynamics of the *Banco de Bogotá* (Bank of Bogotá), a historical institution highly functional in the structuring and consolidation of the ISI. The tower of the *Banco de Bogotá*, finished in 1959 at the political-C.B.D to function as the bank's headquarters, was replaced in the 1980s by a new building located a few kilometres towards north, outside the original limits of the *Centro Internacional*. The building located at the political-C.B.D is used at the end of the 2000s as the main seat of the Council of the Judiciary. The original towers' shining façade built with tones of imported materials that framed the prestigious avenue of the political-C.B.D is highly deteriorated. Regarding Niño's and Reina's (2010: 216) observations, the state has completed only indoor partial renovations. From the outside it is possible to observe numerous vacant levels, former offices used as warehouses whose windows are broken or even boarded up.

<sup>212</sup> See General Auditing Office of the Republic (2014).



Fig. 110. Former *Colseguros* tower (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

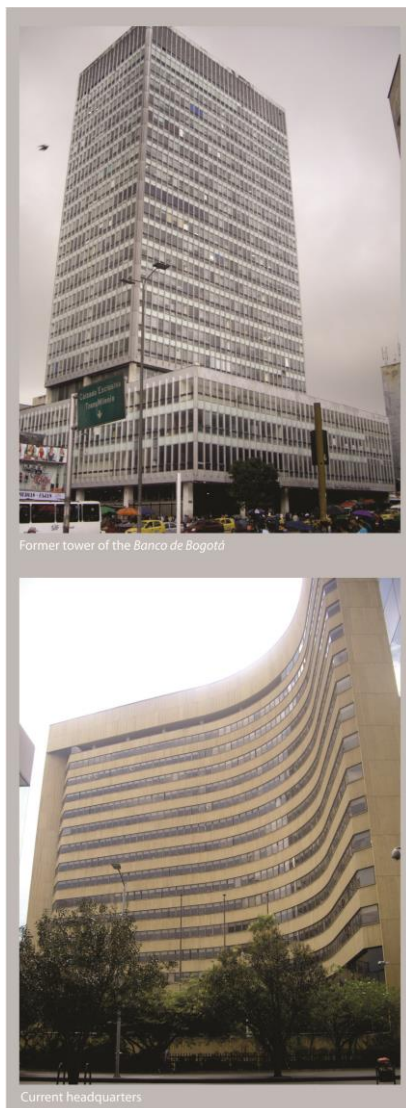
In reference to the relocation of the bank's head office, it is worth pointing out that it took place within a particular socio-spatial conjuncture. On the one hand, there was a strong strategy to renew the bank's "institutional image"<sup>213</sup> that coincided with a great stock market struggle which ended up in the acquisition of the bank by *Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo*, a notable member of the FDB, who needed the dominion over this financial institution in order to "leverage" (*Revista Dinero*, 21-08-2013) his housing construction business. And on the other hand, de-regulation measures were already taking place, particularly the huge enlargement of the delimitation of Bogotá's central area. The new site of the headquarters, *El Sagrado Corazón*, is located near the

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<sup>213</sup> See the bank's history at [bancodebogota.com](http://bancodebogota.com) and the list of institutional buildings built by CUSEGO (i.e. the constructor and designer of the bank's new headquarters) at [www.camcoltda.com](http://www.camcoltda.com) and [www.camcoltda.com/P\\_Institucionales.pdf](http://www.camcoltda.com/P_Institucionales.pdf).

north of the *Centro Internacional* and was included within the broad delimitation of Bogotá's main central area established in 1979. The *Sagrado Corazón* already comprised central functions (mainly official institutions) as well as 'prestige' since it was part of a successful 1950s flagship modernist project promoted by the installed dictatorship that disregarded the *Plan Piloto*'s mandatory location of central functions within the original city centre area<sup>214</sup>.

Fig. 111. Former tower of the *Banco de Bogotá* and current headquarters in the *Sagrado Corazón* (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

<sup>214</sup> The 1950s intervention within the *Sagrado Corazón* is contemporary to the CAN project and to the rejection of the spatial modernization of La Plaza de Bolívar arrangement i.e. Le Corbusier's and Sert's *Centro Cívico*. In this sense, this configuration of institutional buildings can be acknowledged as part of the spatial trend studied in previous chapters in which we link the strategy of creating peripheral "modern" sub-centres to the orthodox maintenance of traditional spatial signs related to the structure of *La Hacienda*.



In accordance to the examples above, different dependencies of the state<sup>215</sup> are functioning in the building erected in 1958 for the ACPO. This is an association that emerged during the period characterised by intense conflict between *La Hacienda*'s elite and emerging leftist rural guerrillas (i.e. end of 1940s and 1950s) in order to promote 'Christian education' among peasants. The construction was sold to the state in 1983 and has not been externally modified. Since then, the ACPO has not had a notable head office. In fact, it was during the 1980s that this organisation started to decay due, among other aspects, to "state budget cut[s]," (*El Tiempo*, 30-12-1994). At present, its main office is located in a single office storey of a tower located in the immediacies of the *Centro Internacional*<sup>216</sup>.

Fig. 112. Former headquarters of the ACPO and of the Agrarian and Mining Credit Agency (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

A further example is the current condition of the extinguished national Agrarian and Mining Credit Agency. As in the previous cases, the building erected for this typical ISI state organisation is used by other public organisms that upkeep the building's original appearance (i.e. there are no aesthetical renovations) and take advantage of the office space strategically located e.g. the Administrative Unit of the National Park System that currently uses this building. Likewise, the institution that replaced the Agrarian and Mining Credit Agency, a public-private firm named *Fiduprevisora S.A.*,

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<sup>215</sup> See Niño and Reina (2010: 208ff). At present, offices of the Ministry of Public Works and of the Comptroller General of the Republic are located in this building.

<sup>216</sup> See the web site [fundacionacpo.org](http://fundacionacpo.org)

located outside Bogotá's original central area within a different type of central space: a spontaneous or 'empirical-C.B.D.'. This is a type of centre that appears as a characteristic spatial product of the last phase of urban centrality which will be addressed further below.

Fig. 113. Limited use of original C.B.D. space by dominant capitals and associations (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

The last example involves an additional component of the spatial tendency being described: the partial use of the political-C.B.D by dominant actors involved in private banking, financial capital, leading firms or companies connected to local economic conglomerates, etc. (see fig. 113 above). According to several reports of Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce, only 15% of the country's and Bogotá's biggest firms are located within the surroundings of this sub-centre and almost none of the 15% are located at its central avenue in 2004<sup>217</sup>. Through direct observations, it is possible to identify that current dominant capitals and associations use only partially the former representative buildings of the ISI's economic and cultural organisations. Whilst the ground floors are barely used for branch offices of local banks, the upper floors appear vacant, partially occupied for different types of offices, offered for sale/rental or occupied by business such as small lawyer firms or loan sharks whose publicity is very precarious e.g. rudimentary advertising stuck to the windows. These characteristics appear more evident within the sector of the political-C.B.D defined by the *Colseguros* tower, the crossroad of the *Carrera Décima*'s avenue and the *Avenida Jiménez*<sup>218</sup>, and the building of the powerful insurance company *Seguros Bolívar* which once hosted the head office of this institution and the U.S embassy<sup>219</sup>.

By contrast, the political-C.B.D and its surroundings do appear as a scarce space to accommodate other type of activities such as discount markets, formal and informal retail, wholesale, franchise clothing stores, specialised shops for home appliances, spare parts, lighting, alternative book shops, etc. According to Jaramillo (2012: 92ff), real estate dynamics reveal that this central area is the most expensive sector in Bogotá to run this sort of business which are mostly directed to popular sectors. Drawing on the author's numbers, this tendency can be observed since the 1980s when land prices for commerce and offices were relatively equal. In the 2000s, popular commercial activities dominate and advance over heterogeneous spaces such as former exclusive buildings and shops, highly deteriorated houses and mixed use buildings built during the previous period of urban centrality, etc. The prices of commercial premises double the value of spaces offered for managerial activities and the profits obtained from sales or rental of

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<sup>217</sup> See *Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. Dirección de estudios e investigaciones (2004). Localización de empresas por tamaño según registro mercantil*. Bogotá.

<sup>218</sup> The *Avenida Jiménez* is the most significant spatial element of the former east-west axis of Bogotá that was replaced through the *Calle 26* during the previous period of urban centrality (see chapter 5).

<sup>219</sup> The key branches and head office of this insurance company founded in the 1940s (i.e. a key decade when most of the ISI associations were founded) are located at the end of the 2000s out of the original city centre area.

such premises can compete to those generated from real estate activities in exclusive commercial city quarters located in the north of the city<sup>220</sup>.

These observations can be complemented with information obtained through field work. Interviews made in 2009 to an agent of the private firm URBE CAPITAL involved in the promotion of an international wholesale centre within Bogotá's original city centre reveal that there are 'big dealers' in this central sector who could afford entire urban renewal projects in the area.

Fig. 114. Flyer. *San Victorino – Centro Internacional de Comercio Mayorista*

**sanvictorino**  
Centro Internacional de Comercio Mayorista

¡En el Centro de todo, en el Corazón de todos!

Como principales ventajas del Centro Internacional de Comercio Mayorista, se destacan las siguientes:

- A. Diversidad de Productos Inmobiliarios adaptados a las diferentes necesidades de los Actores de San Victorino: Oficinas, Locales Comerciales, Locales de Comida, Locales de Servicios, Locales de Entretenimiento, Recinto Comercial (una nueva generación de los "Madrugones"), Parquederos, Depósitos, Supermercado, torre de Telecomunicaciones, entre otros.
- B. Implementación de un modelo de comercialización inmobiliaria novedoso, que busca el ordenamiento de los Grupos comerciales predominantes (Clusters), para asegurar el éxito en el largo plazo del proyecto.
- C. Respeto y opciones de vinculación directa y/o indirecta para grupos asociativos de los actores tradicionales del Sector.
- D. Respeto y opciones de vinculación directa y/o indirecta para los grupos de vendedores ambulantes tradicionales de San Victorino, suscritos en convenios establecidos con el Instituto para la Economía Social IPES.
- E. Respeto y opciones de vinculación directa y/o indirecta para los Últimos expropiatorios de las tierras de las manzanas 3, 10 y 22 del barrio Santa Inés de Bogotá.
- F. Reconocimiento y potencialización de las dinámicas comerciales tradicionales de la zona.
- G. Servicios y Apoyo empresarial para los actores tradicionales de San Victorino que estén o no estén ubicados dentro del Centro internacional de Comercio Mayorista.

Vista del Proyecto finalizado

Parque Tercer Milenio

Promotor: Empresa de Renovación Urbana

Gerencia y Ventas: URBE CAPITAL

URBE Capital - Punto de Atención e Información  
PAI: Manzana 22 Barrio Santa Inés  
Teléfono: +57 1 - 28335919  
Cra. 11 - Cil 9 - Bogotá D.C.

Aclaración: La información aquí contenida es de tipo comercial e ilustrativa y puede ser modificada. Tiene elementos de apreciación y estética que son interpretaciones propias del arquitecto, que no comprometen a la Junta del Fideicomiso del proyecto, ni a los Encargados del Patrimonio Autónomo Inmobiliario del proyecto, ni a la Fiduciaria de Bogotá, ni a los Diseñadores y/o Consultores, ni al Interventor y/o Constructor. Con el ánimo de mejorar la competitividad del Sector de San Victorino y/o del Proyecto, la Junta del Fideicomiso podrá complementar la oferta del mismo con nuevas edificaciones y/o realizar ajustes en general respecto a cualquiera de sus aspectos cualitativos y/o cuantitativos.

Source: URBE CAPITAL (2009)

According to calculations from different private actors<sup>221</sup> involved in the development of the wholesale centre named *San Victorino – Centro Internacional de Comercio Mayorista*, a few traders who lead formal and informal commercial activities in the area move large amounts of cash, about eight times the money that circulates within all the shopping centres located in Bogotá. However, investing the approximate

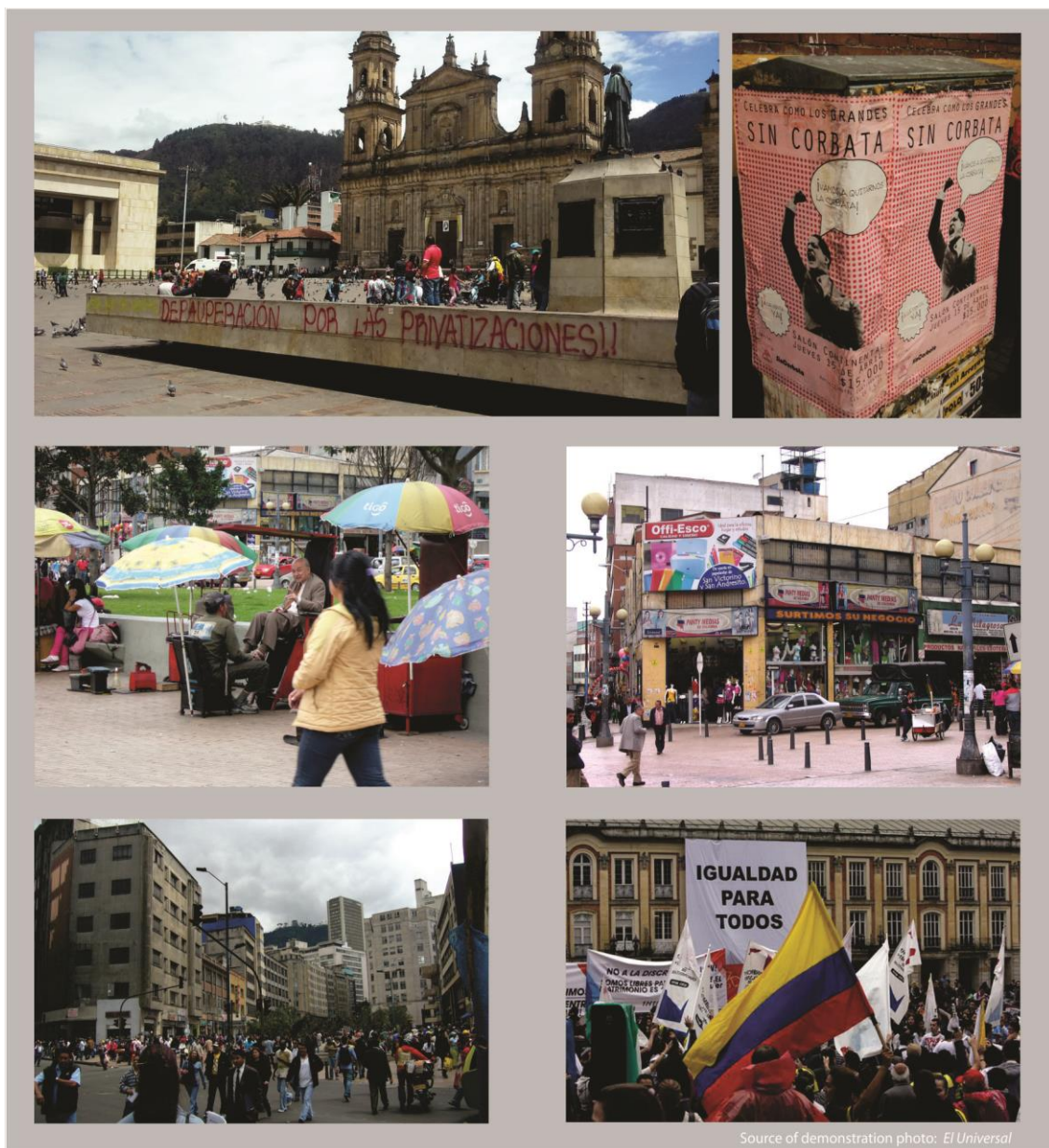
<sup>220</sup> According to Jaramillo (2012: 61), this contradictory situation takes place because, in certain circumstances, the retail oriented to popular sectors has such a rapid 'commercial capital rotation' within small surfaces that it is possible to identify much higher incomes per square metre in popular city quarters than in exclusive ones.

<sup>221</sup> Principally, URBE CAPITAL, major building companies, joint ventures, law firms, etc.



360 million US dollars that the project *San Victorino* costs would imply the formalization of businesses, a move that the so-called big dealers are not willing to make. In other words, we are dealing with a highly ‘dynamic and scarce’ space with highly deteriorated facades that hide powerful actors of which many social groups depend on, particularly, people organised around informal street-sales, retail, wholesale, resale, etc. Such groups use and appropriate via their everyday practices the spatial sign that once represented the main institutional and associative power of the ISI i.e. Bogotá’s political-C.B.D.

Fig. 115. Popular appropriation of original central areas



Source: Own elaboration based on own image archive (fieldworks 2009/2016) and *El Universal*

This socio-spatial condition defines a break in Bogotá's urban centrality history: in the previous periods, elite groups appropriated 'the centre' and displaced the subordinated groups physically and symbolically; during the last moment of urban centrality popular sectors use intensively key spaces of exchange and power and demarcate these spaces according to their values and daily practices. This is valid for the immediate commercial surroundings of the political-C.B.D but also for the neighbouring political sub-centre i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar* and its surroundings. These areas are characterised by expressions of historical and collective discontent such as regular mass demonstrations, political graffiti over monuments, etc. despite authoritative practices such as the constant militarization of public spaces.

Drawing on Jaramillo (2012), the appropriation of Bogotá's original city centre by popular sectors increases in spite of the setting out of official strategies directed to facilitate the re-accommodation of middle and upper classes within the original city centre area. Imposed urban strategies such as the creation of a 18ha middle class enclave in the 1980s and public space improvements developed in the 2000s such as the *Tercer Milenio* park have proved useless to fulfil their original aim.

Fig. 116. Vacant lots remaining from the original *Nueva Santaafé* housing project (2016)



Source: Own elaboration

In reference to the official housing project *Nueva Santaafé*, it is worth pointing out that it was run through exclusion of low-middle social sectors and working classes who historically settled within the southern border of the original city centre that is marked by the presidential palace and a number of ministries. The inhabitants of the *Santa Bárbara*, the neighbourhood largely affected by the project, who had expressed their will to participate in the urban renewal project (Jaramillo, 2012: 76f) but the state opted to run a mass demolishing tactic. According to Jaramillo (2012), this occurred in

spite of the relatively well preserved architectural and urban tissue of the area and the advice of the public financial institution (*Banco Central Hipotecario – BCH*) to set an alternative strategy to develop the project. This generated a strong social rejection (principally vandalism) and the financial infeasibility of the project that was only partially constructed leaving empty lots within its surroundings.

Fig. 117. *Tercer Milenio* park and surroundings (2009)



Source: Own elaboration



On the other hand, the development of the approximate 12 ha *Tercer Milenio* park implied strong repressive methods (Piffano, 2013) and overlooked the inclusion of a highly vulnerable population who inhabited the area that was known as *La Calle del Cartucho* - a city quarter juxtaposed to *La Plaza de Bolívar*'s area characterised by strong socio-spatial deterioration. In this context, the intended transformation envisioned by worldwide renown urbanist-mayor Enrique Peñalosa, a traditional member of an elite family of Bogotá (*La SillaVacía*, 26-10-2011), did not take place. His idea of transforming the 'city centre' through the new park included the materialization of an elitist and exclusive representation of space: a new and central *Zona Rosa*<sup>222</sup> (*Periódico Hoy*, 07-2002). At the end, such an image was not implemented with the construction of the park. This meant, on the one hand, that there was no substitution of social groups and activities, and on the other hand, that the bustling wholesale and informal commercial activities of *San Victorino* consolidated. Nevertheless, the socially deteriorated conditions (mainly homeless, drug addicts, drug and arms sale activities, etc.) sprawled within the surrounding neighbourhoods of *Los Mártires* and *San Bernardo*<sup>223</sup>.

The numbers in terms of daily appropriation of the original city centre in the 2000s are very clear: just 1.3% (Jaramillo, 2012: 63) of the total population that uses this space belongs to the highest social strata which develops official managerial activities or academic/administrative work in the private universities that are located nearby. This phenomenon is expressed in real estate dynamics. As indicated above, the construction of high standard offices and related housing only shows negative numbers in the 2000s within this central area of Bogotá. Interestingly, this trend develops in spite of the introduction of further functional improvements; particularly, the development of a worldwide known Bus rapid transit system (BRTS) called *Transmilenio* which has redefined the public perception of Bogotá<sup>224</sup> and dramatically enhanced mobility and

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<sup>222</sup> The term *Zona Rosa* refers to a typical commercial area frequented by elite and high income groups in Colombia whose prime referent is located in an exclusive area nearby the most expensive residential and commercial sector of Bogotá.

<sup>223</sup> This is a revealing aspect of the imposed and exclusive character of the *Parque Tercer milenio* intervention. A key number to take into account in this regard is that the budget of the project was mostly directed to the acquirement of land. Whilst 70% of the funds were focused on buying lots, only 16% was expended in 'compensations and social actions'. The rest was used for design and construction activities. For further information see Jaramillo's (2012: 86) figure about the official investments on the *Parque Tercer milenio*.

<sup>224</sup> The impact of *Transmilenio* has been recognized in Colombia but also by international organisms such as the World Bank, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the C40 Cities – Climate Leadership Group, among others.



accessibility conditions. However, it has not added to the attraction of high standard real estate investments nor does it incite activities like central headquarters of finance or banking institutions, etc.

In this sense, considerable functional and aesthetical interventions have not produced the intended semiotic shift within Bogotá's original city centre. Hence, beside key aspects such as the immovable character of Colombian political power as a sort of 'total institution', this space also entails referents related to daily activities of popular sectors which differentiate from the spatial signs and daily practices of upper strata which take place elsewhere. As mentioned above, this is a defining aspect of the last phase of urban centrality which implies a strong appropriation of Bogotá's original city centre by the majorities. At the same time, this central space can be acknowledged due to *La Hacienda's* persistent spatial texture and also due to the 'frozen spatial image' of the ISI that is projected by remarkable buildings covered by dust and soot. These constructions are used to denote the authority and solidness of moral, cultural and economic associations that prevailed in the previous period. In this regard, the *Carrera Décima* or Bogotá's political-C.B.D appears at the end of the 2000s as a neat spatial mark of the ISI's peak point and decline.

#### *The prevailing semiotic use of the ISI's empirical-C.B.D*

The *Centro Internacional*, or the ISI's empirical-C.B.D, reveals a different sort of transformation. This transformation consists in a loss of 'functional hierarchy' that emerges at the same time with a gain of 'semiotic value' during the last period of urban centrality. This condition can be observed when evaluating prevailing representations of space in reference to spatial features and dynamics that are related to urban centrality, for example, iconicity, the concentration of social practices and the engendering of scarcity of space.

To begin with, the *Centro Internacional* still appears as the most accessible point within the territory and defines up to the 2000s Bogotá's skyline. At this point in time, no other building or spatial arrangement has surpassed the height of its leading skyscrapers that were all built within the ISI period e.g. the *Colpatria Tower*. Additionally, the *Centro Internacional* presents a series of newer open spaces and buildings that reinforce its 'image' and host a higher concentration of socio-spatial dynamics.

In this sense, it is relevant to underline a highly influential project known as the *Parque Central Bavaria*. The development of *Parque Central Bavaria* is founded on principles of the *Plan Centro* (1985) mentioned above which legitimised the idea of putting market dynamics over the agency of the State. Therefore, two aspects were introduced: on the one hand, the notion of ‘public space’ as a real estate strategy to increase land values; and on the other hand, the concept of ‘the city centre’ as a space characterised by the presence of high income groups associated with high rank urban functions. Accordingly, the city administration defined the development of a single 7ha plot as a key “priority” (Jiménez, 2008: 78) which was owned by Bavaria Brewery. In this plot they developed one of the most important interventions that have experienced Bogotá’s central area. In doing so, the city administration put into practice the conceptual framework of *Plan Centro* and clearly benefitted a firm that belonged to one of the nascent economic conglomerates (*Grupo Santo Domingo*) disregarding the possibility to include other underutilized and deteriorated areas located in the proximities of the *Centro Internacional* as well as other social groups, a greater diversity of residents, alternative urban activities, etc.

As a result, the project was limited from the beginning to fulfil the expectations of a few privileged actors of the private sector who ended up shaping and managing the whole intervention. Key actors involved (including the director of the project - urbanist Fernando Jiménez quoted above) justified the delimitation, location and functions of the project arguing that this area appeared as a ‘suitable spot’ to develop the *Plan Centro*’s spatial priorities and ‘to recycle artistically’ old infrastructure that belonged to the brewery. This meant, on the one hand, the development of “high rank central functions and exclusive residences” (Jiménez, 2008: 78f) within the extended – but blurred super-centre envisioned during the 1980s<sup>225</sup>; and on the other hand, the reuse of former industrial buildings as fancy and exclusive restaurants.

Thus, besides the political support of the monopolisation of space production, the case of the *Parque Central Bavaria* confirms the lack of counteracting spatial images of urban centrality which ended up in the ‘refurbishment of the C.B.D image’ produced during the ISI period. This refurbishment presupposed the creation of gated and guarded open spaces which articulated spatially exclusive residences, gastronomy,

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<sup>225</sup> See above arguments on the affectation of urban centrality preconditions through the development of highly flexible spatial planning from the end of the 1970s onwards.

commercial galleries and a new office tower. This intervention was followed by further real estate activities in the area, mainly, the construction of upper middle class residential towers, hotels, office towers, etc. which are labelled with the emblems of local security firms, main local banks and private financial institutions owned by the dominant economic conglomerates.

Fig. 118. Refurbishment of C.B.D. image (fieldworks 2009/2016)

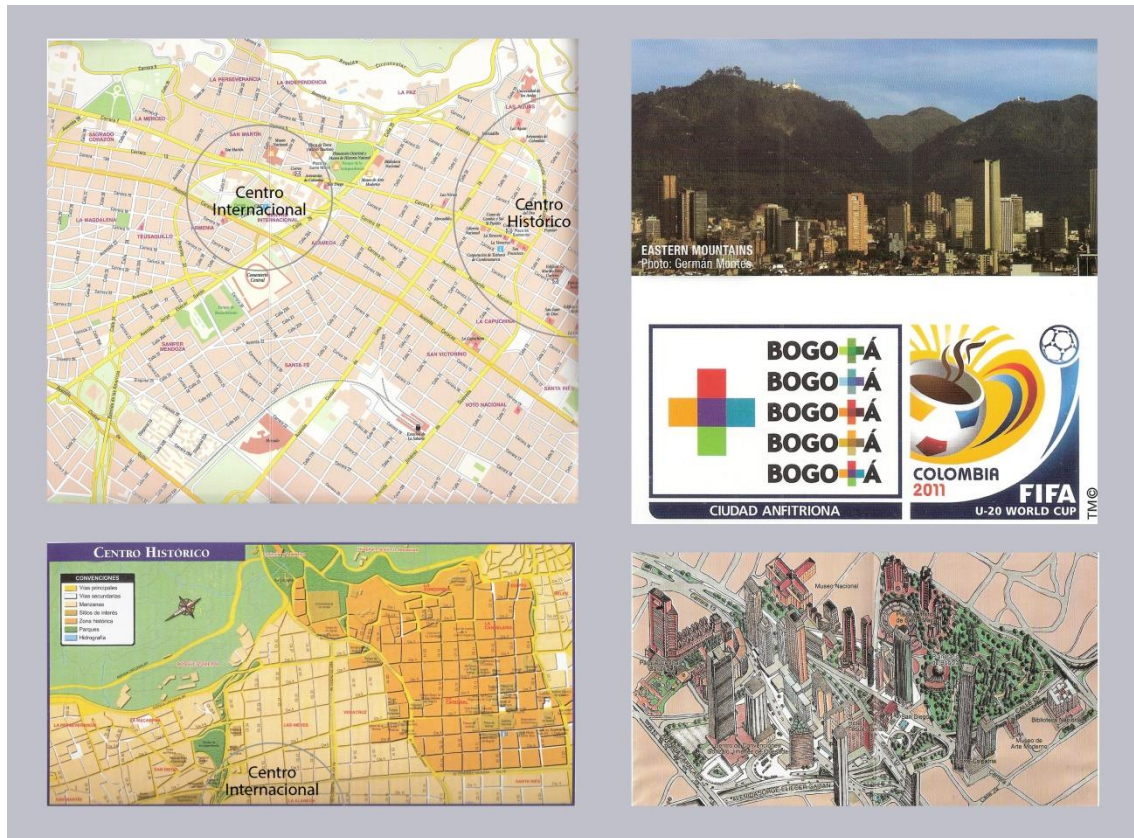


Source: Own elaboration

On the other side, public organisations have also used the C.B.D.-iconic image of the *Centro Internacional* to promote Bogotá as regional (Latin American) “competitive [centre for] business and tourism” (*Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá*, 2010b: 28; *Instituto Distrital de Turismo*, 2011) in accordance to the dominant neoliberal economic model. We refer to entities such as the secretary of economic development, the city planning department and the city tourist institute which have represented this sub-centre, on the one hand, as ‘the heart of the city’ where new BRTS stations and lines converge; and on

the other hand, as a sightseeing spot associated to the ‘historic zone’<sup>226</sup>, particularly within the advertising of the FIFA U-20 WORLD CUP 2011 that took place in Colombia.

Fig. 119. Official promotion of C.B.D image through the *Centro Internacional*



Source: Own elaboration based on Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C. (2011b), Ediciones Monserrate and Editorial Everest (2008)

Consequently, the growth dynamics surrounding this iconic sign of local economic power continues, to a certain extent, the tendency created in the crisis period. This means the displacement of traditional spatial hierarchies and with it the configuration and consolidation of a new east-west axis as well as a strong empirical-C.B.D. where local big capitals visually dominate<sup>227</sup>. The *Centro Internacional* defines the eastern end of the current east–west axis and also appears visually isolated. However, this *Centro* is physically attached to the traditional spatial sign of the political-religious power installed by *La Hacienda* i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar* and its

<sup>226</sup> This association is not only made by official tourist institutions but by private and international tourism promoters (see fig. 116).

<sup>227</sup> In this regard it is important to note that the skyline is only interrupted by the ‘Allianz Tower’ which was originally built to host an office building of a Colombian state organisation.

immediate surroundings. These two cores configure a spatial texture composed by 'juxtaposed' pre-modern and modern urban signs which is often used to elaborate visual representations of Bogotá. This includes the representation/abstraction of this spatial configuration in, urban planning brochures, different kind of official and private documents or tourist guides which inform identity processes.

However, the construction of the iconic image of Bogotá through this kind of published material is presented as an 'overlapping' of sacral and secular spatial signs. In this sense, the recurrent image of the skyline includes the *Centro Internacional* and the peaks of *Monserate* and *Guadalupe* in the background just as pre-modern representations characterised the city in times of *La Hacienda*. In this manner spatial signifiers denoting sacral and monopolist powers are harmonically displayed through strategic signs of place (i.e. post-cards, tourist guides, official logos, etc.) to mean 'Bogotá'.

This set of socio-spatial characteristics of the *Centro Internacional* only represents a 'semiotic dominance' within the whole spatial arrangement. The strong image of urban centrality contrasts to a loss of functional hierarchy within the whole spatial arrangement. Aspects such as the iconic vertical elements (that stand for the supremacy of local monopolist powers), the accessibility facilities in the different regional scales and geographical directions, or the presence of key cultural institutions (e.g. the National Museum, the National Library, the Ring bull, the planetary, among others) are counteracted by the 'functional prevalence' of strong concentration of activities and other spatial signs that are gathered together within newer sub-centres.

This contradiction between semiotic and functional prevalence underlies the development of further spatial fragmentation. This is a fragmentation that 'de-centres' the apparent functional hierarchy of the *Centro Internacional* and of the city's east-west axis i.e. the *Calle 26*. In the following chapter we identify a number of newer sub-centres where essential functional aspects of urban centrality intensely evolve. In this sense, socio-spatial dynamics like strong concentrations of the labour market and the related competition for land (which makes a centre a scarce resource, especially for leading economic activities) takes place several kilometres away from the original city centre area of Bogotá configuring a more complex spatial structure.



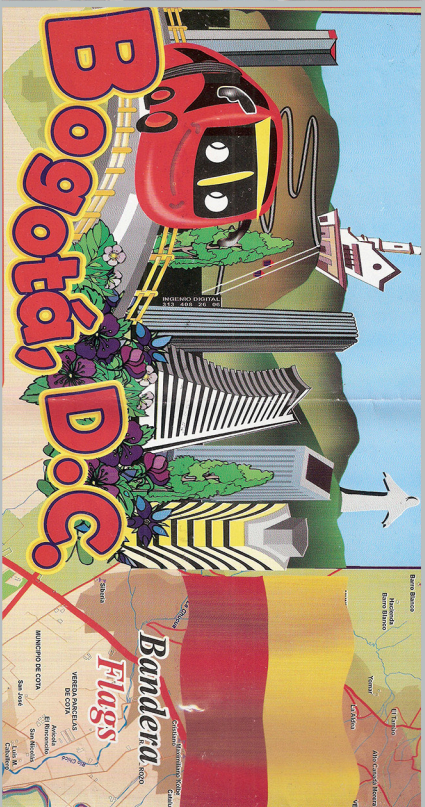
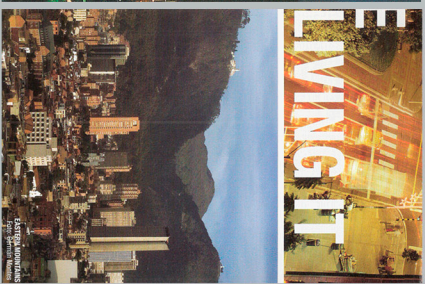
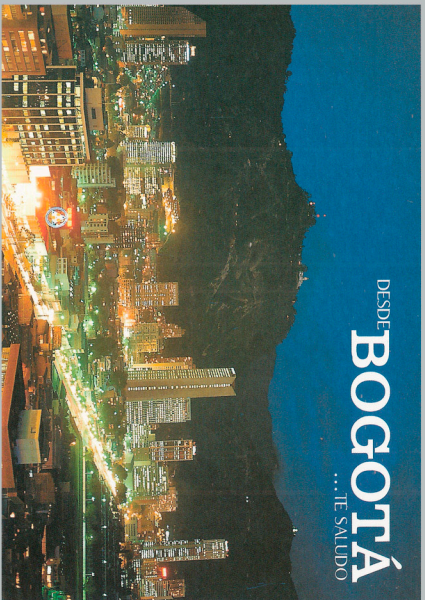
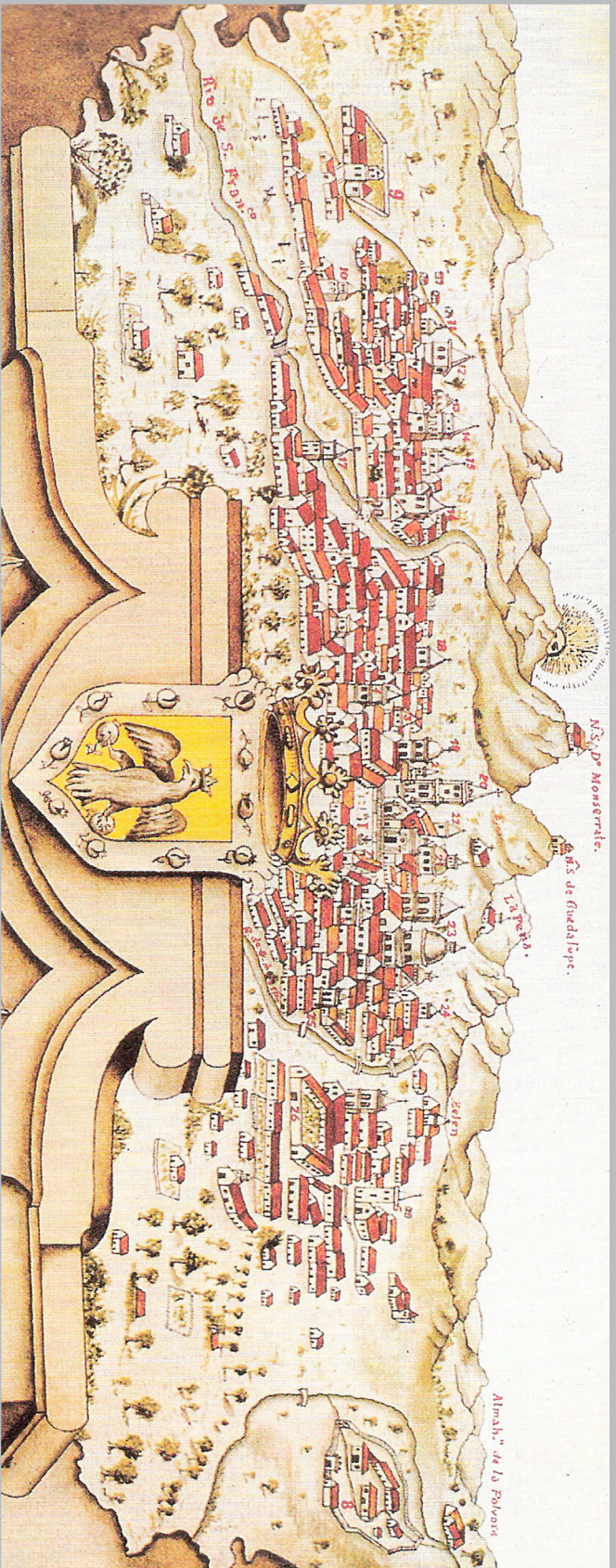
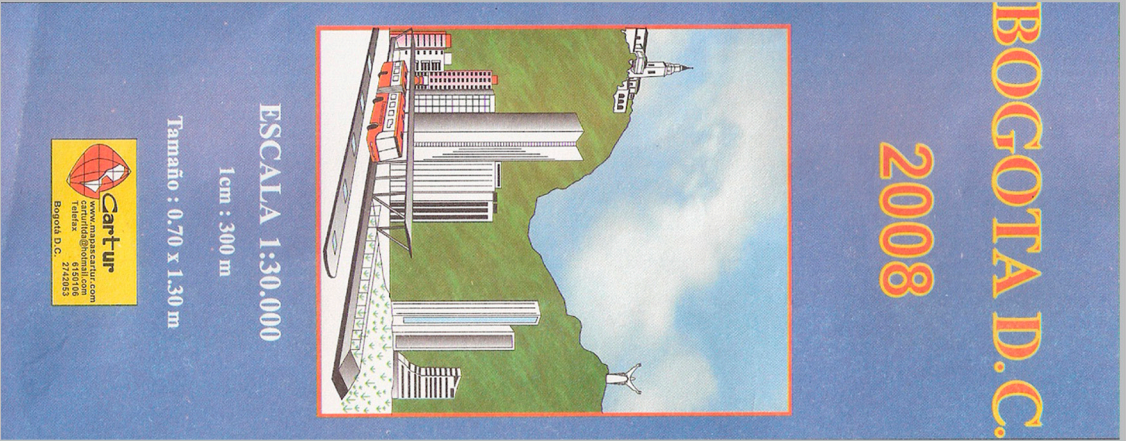


Fig. 120. Prevailing image of urban centrality

Source: Own elaboration based on Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C. (2011b), Ingenio Digital (2009), Cosmoguías Ltda. (2010), Cartur Ltda. (2008) and Joseph Antonio Aparicio Morata (1772) Colección Museo de Bogotá.



#### 6.2.2.2. The sprawling and merging process of new ‘empirical-C.B.Ds’

The conflicting spatialization of political power and the underuse of inherited sub-centres by dominant space producers is correlated to the sprawl and merging process of new ‘empirical-C.B.Ds’. The spatial outcome of this set of heterogeneous urban centrality expressions is a ‘fragmented super-centre’ which is composed by two major central areas: *La Hacienda*’s Modernising Centre (HMC) and the Northern Central area (NCA) (see fig. 146). Whilst the HMC<sup>228</sup> is constituted by the combination of the cores created in the historical moments of urban centrality, the NCA is a spatial creation of the last phase of urban centrality whose origin and main spatial dynamics are strongly related to a monopolization of main construction activities by the ‘Financier - Urban Developer Bloc’ (FDB). Therefore, the NCA appears as a new arrangement that emerges as the spatial component of a tremendous accumulation process that in about three decades has, in many ways, offset the structure of sub-centres developed during several centuries i.e. the cores that configure the HMC.

The main force behind this accumulation process is the formation of the FDB. This is a new dominant association that stands as the ‘trendsetter’ of urban patterns in a context characterised by a spatial de-regulation characterised by the representation of ‘central space’ as a ‘no scarce’ resource and the absence of ‘counteracting images’ of urban centrality (i.e. images configured through a much wider and deeper participation of social, political, cultural groups of the civil society). In this context, the FDB takes advantage of key elements of the spatial structure created in the previous periods that appear as potential spaces for the accumulation for emergent practices.

In this sense, those elements have become highly instrumental in the spatialization of the new mode of accumulation which is characterised, among other aspects, by increasing ‘generation of services’ that are monopolised by a few privileged private actors. This includes two linked elements: first, the production of urban space as a fundamental economic activity; and second, a related accommodation of tertiary activities within the territory, principally the localization of consumption and managerial activities which implies dynamic processes of actualization of centrality.

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<sup>228</sup> This denomination will be explained further below (see chapter seven).

In this context, the FDB adopts ‘space faking’<sup>229</sup> according to the trend of privatization installed via the re-structuring of the economic model. It is important to recall that such a trend has not only included activities like banking, financing, etc., but also the creation of spaces of collective use that become a service in itself. Therefore, one of the main outcomes has been a generalization of ‘the mall’ (*el centro comercial*) that became possible due to several aspects, particularly, having an advantageous access to land.

Accordingly, similar to the first *encomenderos*, the leading bosses of the FDB enjoy landownership titles, and also manage to get benefits in order to acquire more land. This is achieved via a privileging mechanism, specifically, the UPAC which allowed for the monopolisation of the finance of construction activities and ensured resources through the savings of future householders. In this context, ‘space faking’ enters the scene as the primary instrument of dominant urban developers firms (that become associated to the emergent savings and housing corporations - *Corporaciones de Ahorro y Vivienda*) to quickly raise land values having in favour the always flexible land use regulations described above which, according to Müller (1996: 21f), were especially malleable when it concerned the development of malls.

This scenario therefore suggests a patent legitimization of space faking by the state whose primary spatial products became the foundational elements and engine of a spontaneous arrangement of empirical-C.B.Ds. In this order of ideas, the foundational landmarks of the new empirical-C.B.Ds were mostly set through a ‘mall-housing package’ designed by the FDB, together with the promotion of individual transport solutions, offered to upper and upper-middle classes<sup>230</sup>. Whilst the mall provided a potential purchase and meeting place that added value to surrounding plots (also owned by the FDB), the housing ensured nearby consumers. Consequently, this profitable solution involved two key elements: first, a massive transference of funds from those who saved to buy a house and the state that fostered these savings towards the FDB; and second, the filling of the gap left by the state in regard to the production of spaces of collective use, gap completed by the FDB via the shopping mall formula that was later

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<sup>229</sup> This concept is defined by drawing on the notion of “City-tainment” proposed by Hassenpflug (2006a) as well as arguments exposed by Lefebvre (1991) and Gottdiener (1986b). For the discussion and definition of these key concepts see chapter two.

<sup>230</sup> In this regard, see the countless 1980s and 1990s advertisements promoting house as well as car ownership via private finance. Much of this material has been lately published in social networks such as Youtube. See list of primary references.



on complemented with the development of spaces for different managing and decision making activities.

In other words, the FDB was able to create ‘a new offer of representational spaces’ in a context in which the public sphere is essentially weakened and therefore cannot be ‘spatialized’<sup>231</sup>. This general condition is therefore the basis of the success of the FDB’s production of spaces that matches an optimal demand. A demand generated by historically uncritical and obedient upper and middle classes that quickly started to consume malls as well as the increasingly imported goods exhibited in their shop windows<sup>232</sup>. In turn, the consumption of this sort of spaces led to the development of architectural devices to host a wide range of managerial activities nearby these malls, many of them also built via UPAC mechanisms. In this regard, it is possible to identify two phases. Whilst the first one is characterised by the sprawl of postmodern devices that trigger urban centrality (e.g. different kind of malls), the second exposes a process of spatial merging of new empirical-C.B.Ds into a large and single central area i.e. the NCA.

#### *The sprawling process*

The localization pattern of the ‘mall-housing package’ responded to market studies that focused on particular spatial structures. Specially, those structures characterised by two key elements that came onto the traditional rural land distribution: first, an increasing concentration of residential areas of upper and upper-middle classes; and second, a good accessibility provided through a ‘fordistic-like’ layout. Subsequently, the spatial texture that was mainly exploited by the FDB presented the borders and subdivisions of the *quintas* and *haciendas* that appear redefined by modern elements such as motorways constructed during the crisis period or newer plot divisions of *urbanizaciones* i.e. different sorts of gated communities and residential compounds.

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<sup>231</sup> As developed above, such ‘weakening’ is related to structural conditions and a related lack of representational resources that avoid the actualization of collective spaces in the form of (public) squares, streets, etc.

<sup>232</sup> In this regard, we observe that the quick consumption of malls came along with the “slow introduction of economic liberalization” (Misas, 2002) that facilitated the influx of imported goods at the cost of local industry. In this regard, it is essential to recall that such economic liberalization meant no harm for hegemonic economic actors since they were already moving towards the exploitation of non-tradable goods with the support of the traditional political elite. Although non-tradable goods are usually classified within categories such as services like water, gas, electricity or infrastructure, we stress the non-tradable character of urban space and the spatial objects that constitute it like malls, housing, etc. i.e. the primary goods offered by the FDB that started to characterise Bogotá’s spatiality from the 1980s onwards.

Consequently, the spatial layout that supported the subsequent phase of formation and ‘merging’ of new empirical-C.B.Ds should be seen as a meaningful background. Specifically, we refer to a significant layout that has a lot to do with the maintenance of a structure that evolves as a key trace of the structural shift from *La Encomienda* towards the configuration of *La Hacienda*<sup>233</sup>. In this regard, just as the analysis of the *Plaza de Bolívar* (seen as the prime urban referent of *La Hacienda*) has illuminated the understanding of current socio-spatial phenomena, the rural spatiality of *La Hacienda* becomes a fundamental resource to read new spaces of power/decision making. These are central spaces that emerge within the last moment of urban centrality and define the complex spatial texture of the NCA.

In reference to this idea, it is worth paying attention to the different spatial layers of key areas of Bogotá’s northern districts. In figure 122 we underline the preservation of limits defined in the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of *La Encomienda* until modern day Bogotá. In this regard, the process implied in this texture starts with borders of *resguardos* in the proximities of the urban structure of *Santafé* (Bogotá) surrounded by different territories named *Merced*<sup>234</sup>. As the need of land ownership titles increased in order to preserve socio-political power, subdivisions appear defining the legal borders of *haciendas*. Under the rule of the FDB, the *haciendas* turned into developable ‘plots’ that appeared to have a great commercial potential due to historical and spatial characteristics, particularly, those *haciendas* located within the northern sectors of the

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<sup>233</sup> This is a shift from a structural context characterised by the dominant actors’ ownership of urban land and the exploitation of servile labour force, towards a structural context whose material basis is partly composed by the powerful actors’ possession of rural land. For a broader explanation of the socio-political and spatial dynamics involved in *La Encomienda* and in the transformation towards *La Hacienda* see contents of the first stages of pre-modern urban centrality developed above.

<sup>234</sup> *Resguardo* and *merced* are key terms to understand the functioning of *La Encomienda*. According to Guillén (1979: 111ff), *resguardo* refers to a legal figure aimed at ‘preserving’ i.e. *resguardar* land destined to the native’s communal possession. Land reduced as much as possible in order to ensure the survival of the natives, the tribute to the crown and the servile labour force to sustain the idle way of life of the Hispanic elite. In this manner a colonial territory during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries appears characterised by the presence of *resguardos*, cities where the Hispanic elite was allowed ‘to own’ land, and rural areas known as *merced* i.e. a legal figure of medieval origin that granted land to colonizers in order to promote “rooting” (Mayorca, 2002). Therefore a *merced* was destined to reside for a specific period of time and excluded from the possibility of commercial “speculation” (Mayorca, 2002). In reference to the *resguardos*, the Hispanic had no legal property rights over them, yet the colonial elite managed to exploit these lands as commodities. Following Guillén’s (1979) argument, with the increase of emancipated creole population (i.e. individuals not subjected to tribute) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the labour force ensured through *La Encomienda* had no longer effectiveness to maintain the *encomenderos*’ predominant way of life. Therefore, it became necessary to acquire legal right over land in order to ensure the vital submission of creole population (i.e. the progeny of natives who were subjected to tribute) who turned into ‘peons’ that sustained the social and political power of the emergent *hacendados* - former *encomenderos*. For more contents related to this spatial and “demographic revolution” (Guillén, 1979) see chapter 5.1.2.

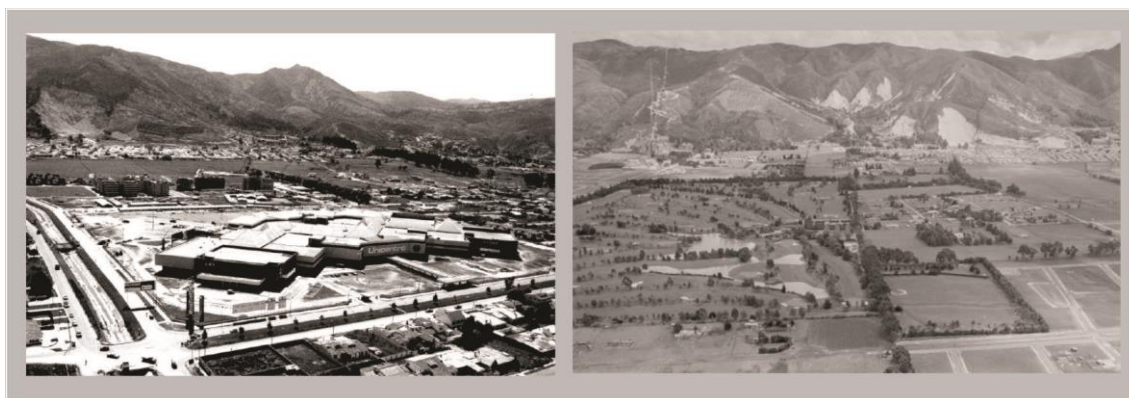
constantly expanding or ‘ubiquitous super-centre’ described above, for example the *haciendas* of *Santa Ana*, *Santa Bárbara* or the former *resguardos* of *Usaquén* that were located in the proximities of highly prestigious neighbourhoods such as *El Chicó*.

The interest of the FDB in these areas appears logical because of their predefined ‘social value’ that is translated into a profit-making potential. That value is established through the spatial polarization developed in the previous period. Thus, the northern half of the emergent metropolitan territory became the FDB’s target since it was already sought by upper classes and snob middle sectors of the population that under the figure of the UPAC looked for a place to live that fitted their symbolic expectations of status. In this scenario, the FDB focused its housing offer accordingly along with ‘pioneer malls’.

Two referents emerge in this regard: (1) *Unicentro* (1976) and the (2) *Centro Comercial Granahorrar* (1982), known today as *Avenida Chile Centro Comercial y Financiero*. Whilst the first referent became an instrument to set the typical sprawling model that was reproduced within the city’s periphery by the FDB, the second referent arose as the prime spatial sign of the whole UPAC system whose primary bank was *Granahorrar*.

- (1) In reference to *Unicentro* as pioneer ‘space faking’ milestone it is worth underlining several aspects. Initially, *Unicentro*, built by the highly influential developer firm Pedro Gómez & Cia (a key member of the FDB), was located within the borders of the *hacienda Santa Bárbara*, at the end point of an avenue that had been recently extended towards north – the *Carrera 15*. Interestingly, the mall was “not successful” (Müller, 1996) in its first years (i.e. the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s) in spite of two key strategies defined by Pedro Gómez & Cia: on the one hand, the construction of high income residential complexes in the proximities of the mall; and on the other hand, the use of the predefined good physical accessibility that corresponded to the “final stop of numerous bus lines” (*Publicaciones Semana, Pedro Gómez & Cia*, 2011) that connected this peripheral area to the rest of the city. Further empirical data suggest that this ‘weak start’ was followed by a sudden enlargement of the mall in 1989 aimed at accommodating import stores such as *Casa Grajales* or *Iserra* that “expanded significantly” (*El Tiempo*, 10-06-1999) thereafter.

Fig. 121. *Unicentro* (1970s) and surroundings characterised by the *Club El Country* (1965)



Source: Unknown / Paul Beer

These stores appear as the first referents of the slow but consistent liberalization of the economy that, as mentioned above, did not represent a threat to hegemonic economic actors who were now taking care of juicy real estate and infrastructure businesses. More importantly, this ‘delayed take off’ of *Unicentro* as, perhaps, the most famous shopping centre in Colombia, corresponds also to a wave of openings of malls built by members of the FDB and the state (through the already extinguishing public banking/financing) which later on became milestones within the general spatial development process. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the shopping centres *Hacienda Santa Bárbara* (1989), *Andino* (1993), *Bulevar Niza* (1988), *Plaza de Las Américas* (1991) among others that, according to FEDELONJAS<sup>235</sup>, had “saturated” (Müller, 1996: 16) the shopping centres’ market in Bogotá in such a short period of time i.e. end of 1980s beginning of 1990s.

Therefore, the development of this mall should not be seen, as it is often suggested, as an engine of a linear or organic tendency connected to a social taste for malls that freely developed in Bogotá. By contrast, the commercial success appears along with the conflicting unfolding of macro-economic transformations and the expansion of the more and more powerful conglomerates and its associated urban developer firms that managed to introduce massively their projects and the spatial practices related to them e.g. high consumption of faked public spaces. Consequently, we refer to a generalization of the mall that coincides with the consolidation of the dominant “economic conglomerates,” (Misas, 2002) that became essential in the

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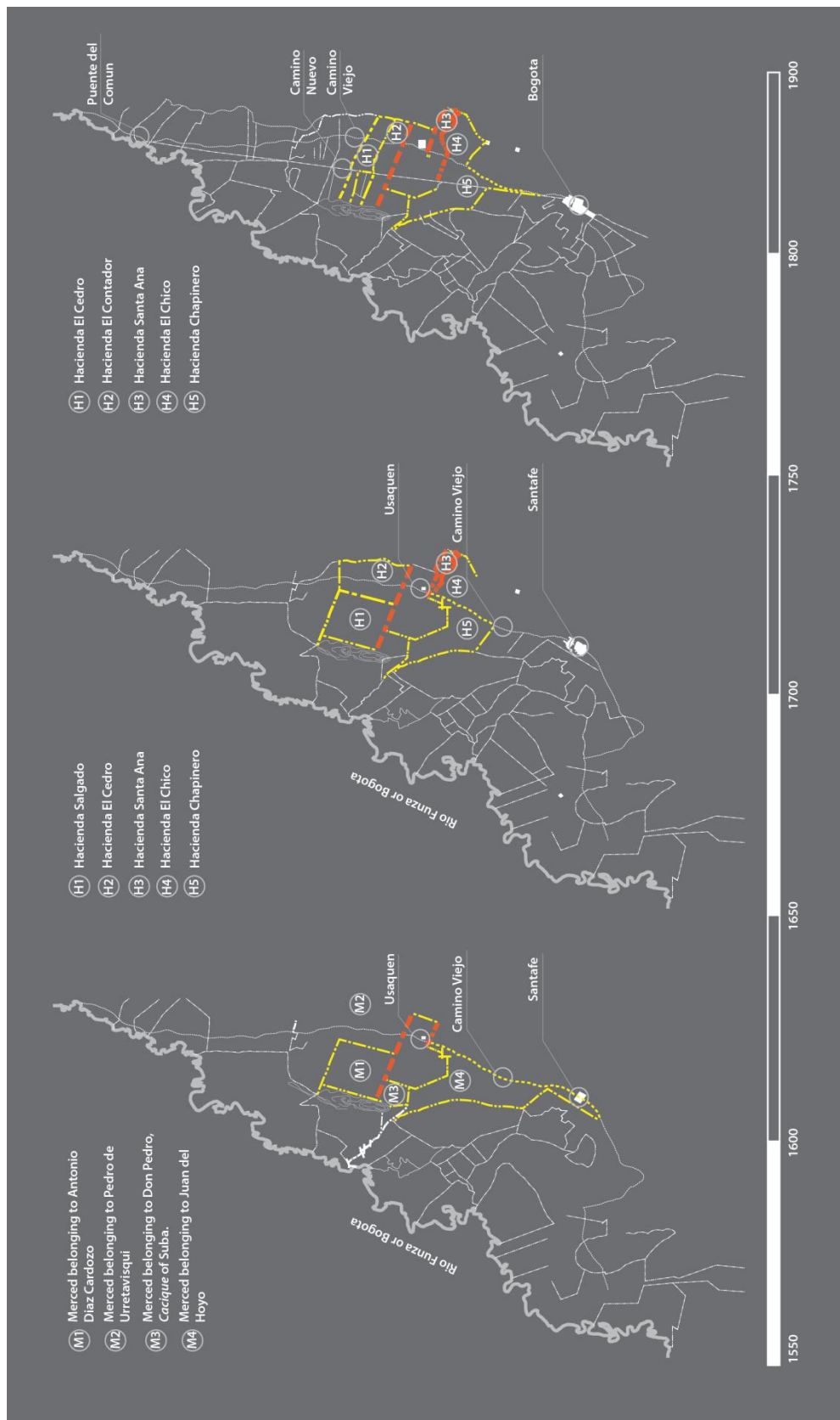
<sup>235</sup> FEDELONJAS is a leading association that aims at promoting the ‘growth and expansion’ of Colombia’s real estate sector. See list of primary sources.

configuration of the FDB and its concomitant monopolization of land and privatizing construction activities.

Let us take a closer look to meaningful features of the spatial outcome of the introduction of the FDB's 'mall-housing package'. The figure below shows the already mentioned historical land subdivision within the surroundings of the area affected by the construction of *Unicentro*. It is possible to identify a typical spatial configuration defined by *La Encomienda* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in which the northern surroundings of *Santafé* are characterised by the presence of several *Mercedes* that surround the *resguardo* of *Usaquén*, particularly, the *Mercedes* allocated to Antonio Díaz Cardozo (north), Pedro de Urretavisqui (north-east), Don Pedro Cacique de Suba (west) and Juan del Hoyo (south). By the mid of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and beginnings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the *resguardo* of *Usaquén* is already surrounded by several *haciendas*: *hacienda de Salgado* (north), *hacienda El Cedro* (north-east), *hacienda Santa Ana*, *El Chicó*, and last, but not least, the *hacienda de Chapinero* (south) owned by the Dominican order that, according to records gathered by Carrasquilla (1987: 213), had also actively appropriated lands that originally belonged to the *resguardo* of *Usaquén* just as regular *hacendados* used to do.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *resguardo* of *Usaquén* appears already as a *hacienda*, a process that started with viceregal orders which demanded the eviction of natives from *Usaquén* in the turbulent end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginnings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. the period in which the republic is born and *La Hacienda*, as dominant mode of association, takes over). The displacement of the original 'owners' of this land was later on intensified because the nascent state provided such small and individually unproductive parcels to the natives that they could not do anything but sell their recently allocated properties. In the case of *Usaquén* the best 'bidder' of the numerous parcels that once composed the *resguardo* of *Usaquén* was the powerful local *Sarmiento Garavito* family who aggregated these plots in 1845 and converted them into the *hacienda Santa Bárbara de Usaquén* (and the inhabitants of these plots into peons accordingly).

Fig. 122. Land ownership historical process of Bogotá's periphery



Source: Own elaboration based on Carrasquilla (1987: 161/169/193)

Drawing on Carrasquillas' (1987: 213) survey, the *hacienda Santa Bárbara* was bought by the *hacendado* José María don Pepe Sierra in 1899. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sierra's progeny just as other landowners took advantage of these properties and participated in their urbanization under the agenda of the FDB. The spatial outcome was the development of a large urban sector that presents numerous mega-blocks (of about 100ha each) defined by motorways or avenues that mostly follows the pre-modern subdivision of land defined by the former limits of *resguardos* and *haciendas*. Hence, the functionalist spatial organisation of this geography based on mechanical/individual transport somehow resembles a fordistic, high-performance cityscape. However, this layout is not really defined by technical criteria (e.g. the optimal speed of the private car) which have determined, to a great extent, the morphology of this sort of spatial developments<sup>236</sup>. Conversely, the physical structure of this northern sector of Bogotá was organised according to the maximum benefit in transactions between great landowners and financier-urban developers who are embedded in a process of spatial de-regulation. In this context, this sector of Bogotá is marked either through anonymous numbers or via the names of *hacendados* that end up remembered as social heroes (e.g. note the *Avenida Pepe Sierra* that ends in the *hacienda Santa Barbara*, a former reference point within the *resguardo of Usaquén*). In addition, the inner distribution of such mega-blocks starts from the individual development of housing compounds or single family houses that surround malls or exclusive spaces such as elite private clubs or high income retirement homes<sup>237</sup>.

This type of configuration composed of functionalist isolated spatial units can be clearly observed within the area affected by the construction of *Unicentro*. In the middle of the 1980s, this area presents a series of empty plots that a few years later were 'filled up' with malls that express the final 'take off' of the FDB; principally, the *Centro Comercial Hacienda Santa Barbara* (located 1 km away from *Unicentro* at the *Carrera Séptima* next to exclusive residences and a private clinic) and the *Centro Comercial Andino* developed by typical FDB developer firms i.e. *Pedro Gómez & Cia / Hernando Casas*.

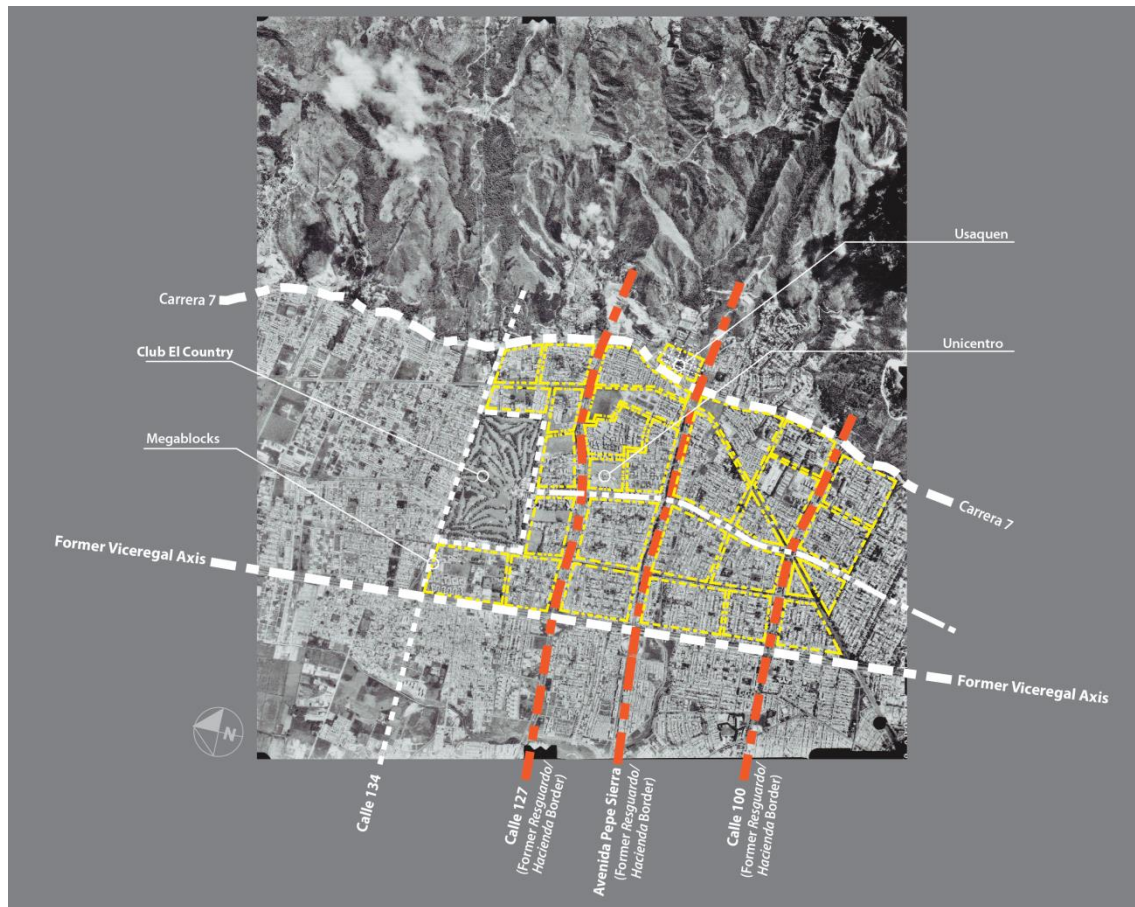
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<sup>236</sup> In this regard see the case of the modern and functionalist planning of East and West Berlin in Jiménez (2007).

<sup>237</sup> See the case of the Country Club previously located within *Unicentro's* proximities and the nursing home Cora Suites 127 Plenitud.



Fig. 123. Pre-modern layout and resemblance of high-performance spaces (1980s)



Source: Own elaboration based on Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC)

- (2) In order to characterise our second referent, the *Avenida Chile - Centro Comercial y Financiero* (AC), it is essential to differentiate this mall clearly from *Unicentro*. In this regard it is worth pointing out that the introduction of AC, which includes office space within its original architectural design, not only appears as the prime spatial referent of the consolidated UPAC system, but also as the dialectical counterpart of the sprawl model promoted through the mall-housing package and specific projects like *Unicentro*.

In this sense, AC arises at the beginning of the 1980s as a milestone of a core or sub-centre that became essential in the reorganisation of Bogotá's spatial structure within the last moment of urban centrality. We refer to an 'empirical-C.B.D' located several kilometres away from the original city centre in an area characterised by the presence of northern upper class neighbourhoods: *Chapinero* and *El Chicó*. In this case, the process of concentration of activities developed according to two interrelated

aspects: a) the deregulation trend initiated in the 1970s that was legitimated through the already mentioned *Acuerdo 7* launched in 1979; b) the growth of tertiary activities within the configuration of economic conglomerates which profited from the consolidation of strategies such as the UPAC that empowered greatly key actors of the private sector, particularly those related to real estate and infrastructure.

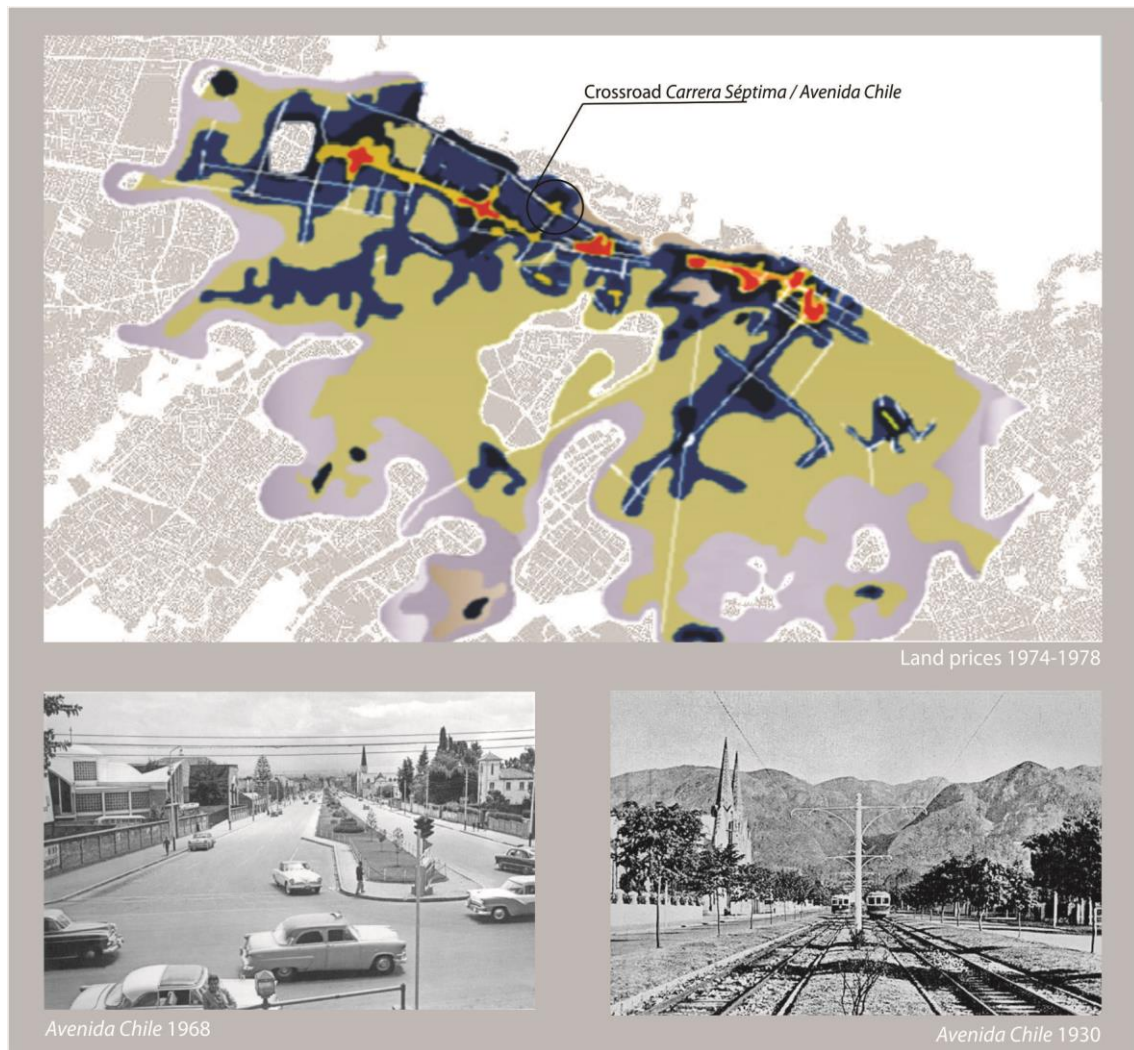
A foundational element and trendsetter within the configuration of this new sub-centre is the office building *Edificio Fernando Mazuera* constructed in 1978. This tower is currently the headquarters of a firm founded by one of the key actors involved in the development of the new urban model ruled by the FDB: *Fernando Mazuera*, a politician-entrepreneur who also played a key role in the partial re-structuring of the original city centre area in the 1950s<sup>238</sup>. In this regard, *Revista Semana* (29-08-1983) had already identified the firm *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* as an active participant of the UPAC model at the beginning of the 1980s. This influential role of *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* appears spatially confirmed through the presence of its emblematic office building. *Mazuera's* tower propelled a new location pattern of firms of prestige and of workplace of the emerging and increasingly privatized financial sector.

Such a location pattern is initiated with key features of urban centrality: the selection of a crossroad that is defined by the *Carrera Séptima* and *Avenida Chile* (accessibility) by a dominant and hegemonic actor (power). This was a space often 'represented' through photography (symbolism) that registered the emergence and growth of elite neighbourhoods. In addition, this crossroad and its surroundings presented much lower land prices at the end of the 1970s than the original city centre area (mainly, the *Avenida Jiménez* and the political-C.B.D) where the financial sector traditionally concentrated.

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<sup>238</sup> As mayor and active member of the elite, Mazuera promoted the completion of the political-C.B.D or *Carrera Décima* project as well as adjacent mobility infrastructure essential in the spatial configuration of the *Centro Internacional*. See chapter 5.2.3

Fig. 124. Urban centrality preconditions within the *Avenida Chile*



Source: Own elaboration based on Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá (2008) and Allen Morrison

Such prestige and land prices in a context of spatial de-regulation was very attractive to the firm *Fernando Mazuera & Cia* who proudly presents the office tower on its official website<sup>239</sup> as an engine of the ‘displacement’ of high rank functions in Bogotá (without mentioning the decay of the original city centre and other critical socio-spatial affectations associated to it) and the subsequent formation of the main financial core of the country: *La Avenida Chile*<sup>240</sup>. Figure 125 shows that by the beginning of the 1980s the *Mazuera Tower* was already surrounded by several office buildings. This situation contrasts radically with the configuration of this very spot only a few years before i.e. end of the 1970s when the area was characterised exclusively by

<sup>239</sup> [www.mazuera.com/#!/proyectos/realizados/institucional/](http://www.mazuera.com/#!/proyectos/realizados/institucional/)

<sup>240</sup> This issue will be described in detailed further below.



upper class residences, religious buildings, and services such as the main secondary school for the Colombian elite (the *Gimnasio Moderno*).

Fig. 125. Sudden shift of *La Avenida Chile* at the end of 1970s and beginnings of the 1980s

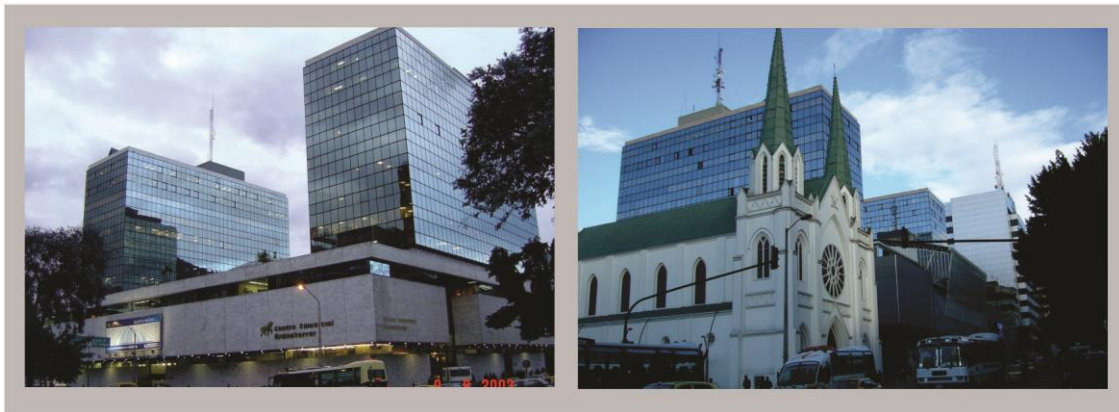


Source: Own elaboration based on Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC) and Saldarriaga (2006: 130)

This sudden upraise of key tertiary activities within the borders of *Chapinero* and *El Chicó* demonstrates the successful emergence of the new productive system of space which is spatially signified through the design and construction of the AC. The AC was finished in 1984 by the main UPAC Bank (*Granahorrar*) to establish its head office. Consequently AC presents a particular configuration. The main offices are located in four towers that are placed over a solid commercial block that was designed as a ‘mall’. This configuration of levels and functions differentiates this significant

building in aesthetic and functional terms, and at the same time, defines the spatial representation of the true functions of the overall productive system: on the top of the building, the managerial activities that allow the massive production of ‘faked public space’ (i.e. the generalization of the mall in the whole country), a typical postmodern spatiality that is actualized in the lower section of the building. This kind of space (essentially designed to propel and conceal profitability/consumerism imitating ‘civility’) is spatially developed in relation to other typical elements produced by the FDB via UPAC such as gated communities or residential compounds that are designed strictly in commercial terms<sup>241</sup>.

Fig. 126. AC in 2003 before façade renewal (original design) and view from the side of the *Porciúncula* church in 2010



Source: Own elaboration based on own photo archive and *panoramio*

On the other hand, architectural elements of the AC are iconic features of the corporate realm, particularly, glass façades which do not allow the recognition of the activities that take place in the interior of the building. The pronounced visual impact of AC introduced a fresh and modernised convention of secular power. Yet, the insertion of AC also modified and complemented its immediate context which was characterised by the monastery and the church of the Franciscan order. These buildings were partially transgressed to allow the accommodation of the new spatial sign. The outcome of this intervention is therefore a significant spatial arrangement that transmits contradictory but also complementary signals: a renewed ‘economic power’ which appears isolated from the main referents of political authority and democratic practices that are located several kilometres away, in the *Plaza de Bolívar*. Nevertheless, the fact that this

<sup>241</sup> We refer here to the above concept of ‘mall-housing package’. The strict commercial criteria in the design of housing from the 1980s onwards are also addressed in Saldarriaga (2006).

arrangement does not allow for a legible or visible relation between signifiers of state authority and the increasingly empowered private sector is not a problem. The UPAC's main spatial sign i.e. the AC appears legitimized by the presence of a sacred spatial sign of 'mercy and poverty' composed of different architectural elements of the Franciscan complex. We particularly refer to the *Porciúncula* church which was complemented with a statue of San Francis who 'welcomes' the consumers that enter the mall.

In addition to AC's representational values, it is essential to identify that the completion of this building precedes a radical change in the localization of high rank functions and the peak of land prices within the city. By 1987, three years after the construction of AC, the original city centre area (which includes the political and empirical-C.B.Ds developed in the previous period) is replaced as the scarcest area in the territory for the localization of dominant economic activities. Considering maps of land prices' variations<sup>242</sup>, the new space that started to attract this sort of activities is the area identified as Northern Central area (NCA) in this research. This is a zone that is double the size of the original city centre area (around 10km<sup>2</sup>) whose limits are marked by significant urban and architectural spatial elements mentioned above. On the one hand, the eastern and western limits are the traditional *Carrera Séptima* and the *Autopista Norte* i.e. the thoroughfare built during the crisis period onto the earlier viceregal axis that connected *Santafé* (Bogotá) to the northern regions characterised by *La Hacienda's* values. On the other hand, the northern and southern borders are the *Avenida Chile* (identified by the AC), and the *Calle 134* that stands as the northern limit of the *Club El Country* whose surroundings are influenced by the presence of *Unicentro*. Additionally, the inner space of NCA is divided by transversal sections that in most of the cases is defined by mobility infrastructure which coincide with further subdivisions of *haciendas*.

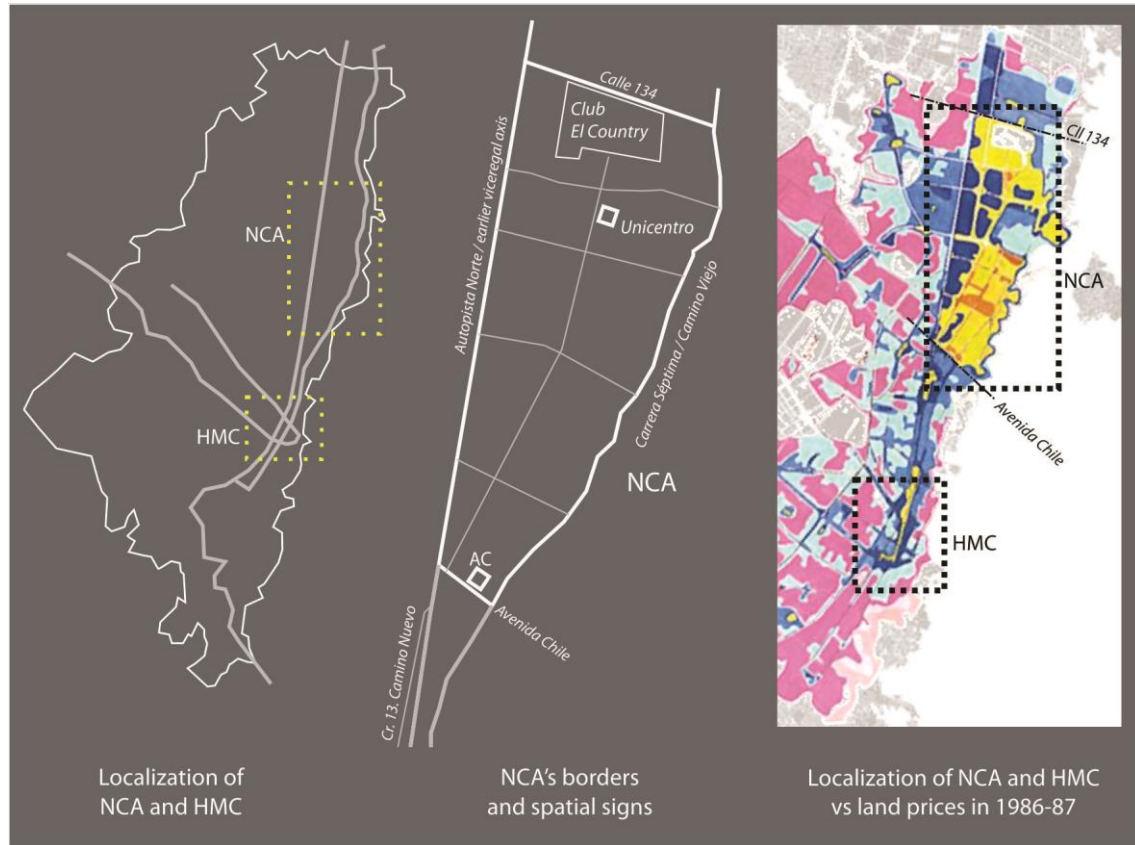
Consequently, NCA is characterised by two key elements: first, the modernised spatial features of the social structure of *La Hacienda*. Such features determine the general morphological structure which were composed by motorways and related spatial elements whose location and arrangement are subjected to pre-modern rural landownership patterns. Second, spatial signifiers which fall into the category of

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<sup>242</sup> See fig. 127 below.

‘postmodern city centre ideal type’ and play a key functional and semiotic role within the emerging space production system.

Fig. 127. Spatial configuration of NCA: spatial signs and borders



Source: Own elaboration. (Land price map taken from Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2008)

In sum, the identification of NCA as a significant area informs us of a long but continuous process of accumulation based on the monopolisation of land by dominant actors. The process begins with the usufruct of colonial mechanisms and is concluded by a real estate monopoly which set up a new layout, as a meaningful spatial texture, which communicates through the superposition of its different layers a ‘modernised tradition’ of dispossession and of social privileges in regard to the access and usufruct of land. The moderniser of such tradition defined by *La Hacienda* is the FDB, a new association that not only heavily influences planning practices but that also designs, constructs, and finances urban development. In so doing, the FDB decides the location of essential elements such as the foundational spatial signs (*Unicentro* and *AC*) of the incoming space production system. We refer to a system (re)produced by typical postmodern practices such as ‘privatization’ or ‘consumerism’ and that is composed by



social relationships dominated by ‘corporate power’. The outcome at the beginning of the last moment of urban centrality is the creation of a new central area (i.e. the NCA) that is detached from the original city centre area i.e. the HMC and has the potential to become a dominant centre, a centre that entails nascent spatial signs of emergent social relations of production and consumption.

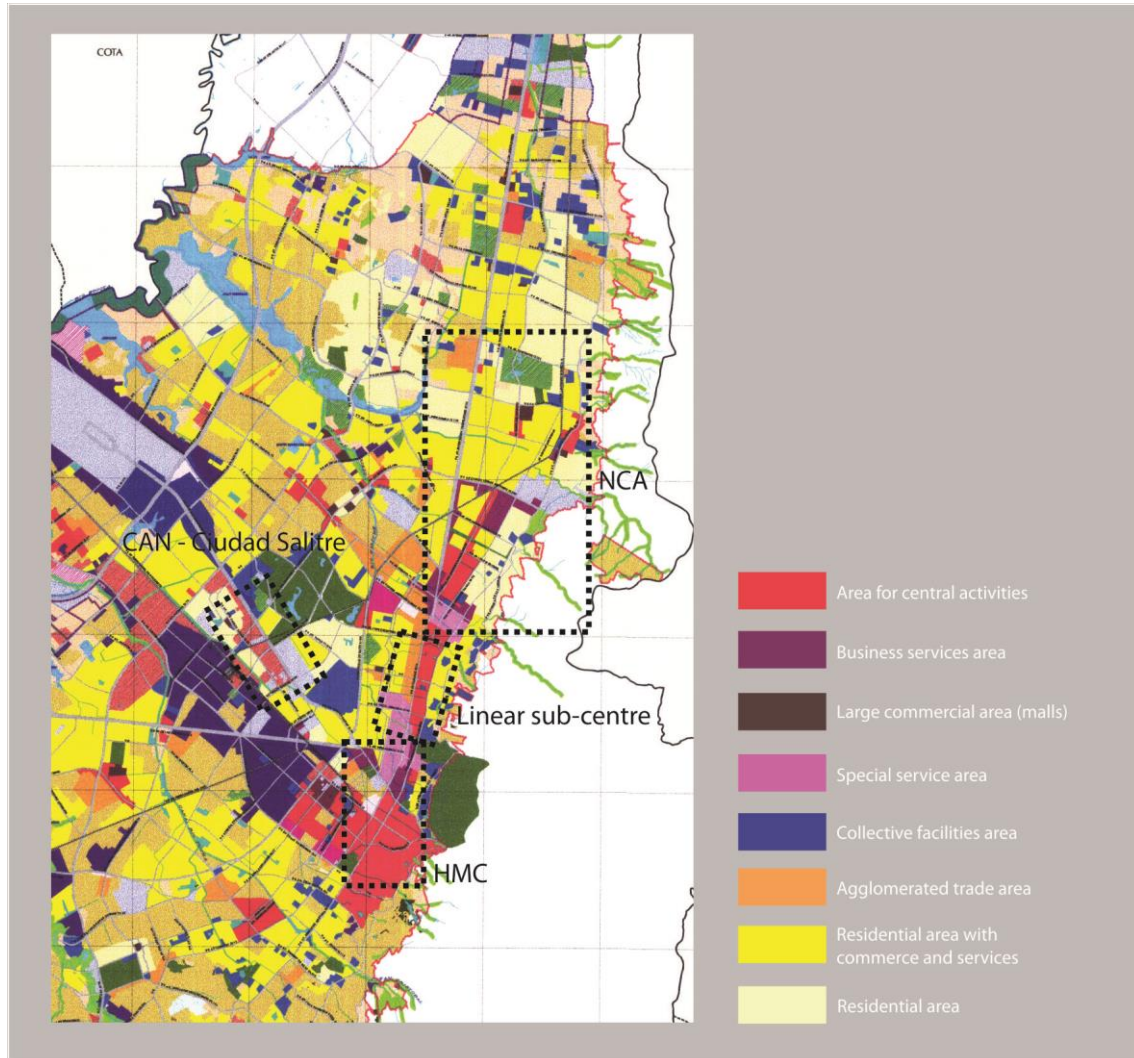
### *The merging process*

The redefinition of Bogotá’s spatial structure is highly informed by the appropriation practices of the NCA by dominant actors. During the last decades NCA has provided the possibility to accumulate key activities essential to the consolidation of the new structure. Thus, it is possible to identify a dominant spatial concentration pattern of key decision-making activities in the 2000s which implies functional and semiotic characteristics that altogether end up defining a much more complex urban centrality configuration. Two aspects related to the functional dimension of urban centrality contribute to the merge of NCA’s nodes with the sub-centres created in the previous historical moments that configure the HMC: (1) the generalization of varied kind of mixed uses that surround and configure the different cores, and (2) everyday commuting dynamics that converge mainly in NCA and the HMC.

Considering these two aspects, it is essential to underline the following. Although the entire agglomeration presents only quite a few patches of pure residential areas, the presence of mixed-uses within NCA and the HMC is particularly dense which is a condition that can be seen in official plans as well as through direct observations. Figure 128 illustrates the delimitation of NCA and HMC and further central areas in relation to Bogotá’s official plan of land uses. On the one hand, the limits of NCA are defined by the criteria explained above which are related to the localization and interrelation of key semiotic and functional elements of the new space production system (particularly *Unicentro* and AC). Those limits also respond to the presence of mixed-uses spatially organised according to the NCA’s significant layout. On the other hand, the HMC that includes the already analysed sub-centres: the foundational sector, the zone affected by the political-C.B.D and the *Centro Internacional* i.e. the empirical-C.B.D configured in the crisis period. Finally, we identify a linear sub-centre that links the NCA and the HMC. As an additional component, there is also the area described in

previous chapters defined by *Ciudad Salitre* and the CAN which presents less spatial hierarchy.

Fig. 128. Delimitation of major central areas in relation to official land use plan (2004)



Source: Own elaboration based on Planeación Distrital. Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá. The legend is translated according to specific terms of the original source

Let us start characterising the linear sub-centre. This linear element is defined by the absence of spaces of political and economic power. These are central spaces that are present in the HMC and the NCA. In this context, what distinguishes this element is the presence of varied services and commercial activities that develop within a rather heterogeneous urban tissue along three axes: the *Carrera Séptima* i.e. (former *Camino Viejo*), the *Carrera 13* (former *Camino Nuevo*) and the *Avenida Caracas* i.e. the avenue that continued the thoroughfare built onto the old viceregal axis. This linear sub-centre attracts a considerable number of users and concentrates numerous private and public

institutions (e.g. state organisms, technical institutes, private universities, etc.), retail, small formal and informal manufacturing activities, socially and functionally differentiated services, etc. However, when comparing commuter dynamics and the everyday use of this linear sub-centre it emerges more as a ‘corridor’ than as a main ‘core’.

Fig. 129. Axes of linear sub-centre (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

As a result, direct observations reveal a dominant character of this space as a ‘transit area’. It is dominated by the flux of different forms of public transport (BRTS, traditional bus lines), automobiles, bikeways, pedestrians, etc. which captures only 16.5% of the total amount of trips made towards the city’s super-centre i.e. the great central area composed by this linear sub-centre, the NCA and the HMC. Drawing on official mobility reports developed by Bogotá’s department of mobility<sup>243</sup> in 2007, this linear sub-centre attracts everyday 37,500 trips made in public transport and 11,250 trips made in private cars. This contrasts clearly to the commuting numbers of the HMC and the NCA: whilst the HMC captures 37.9% of the journeys i.e. 112,500 trips the

<sup>243</sup> Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C.; Consultora DG – C&M Cal y Mayor y Asociados (2007).

second gets 135,000 trips which represents 45.6% of the commuters who use Bogotá's super-centre every day.

These numbers are quite significant in quantitative and qualitative terms. To begin with, it proves the increasing functional hierarchy of NCA within the whole metropolitan structure since it overcomes the arrangement of sub-centres developed in the previous phases of urban centrality in just a couple of decades: the main core NCA captures 7.7% more journeys in the 2000s. Taking this difference into account, it is worth noting that NCA presents the same amount of trips made in public transport than the HMC i.e. 82,500 journeys. This phenomenon is relevant considering that most users of the original city centre area belong to the lower and middle-lower social strata: only 1.6% belongs to the highest social groups<sup>244</sup>.

In other words, NCA captures a greater amount of diversity among its commuters. This is a situation that should not be confused with a characterisation of the NCA as a place of acceptance of 'otherness' or as a focus of 'civility', as we will describe further below. In contrast, the exposed commuting numbers refer to a growing functional prevalence of NCA that appears correlated to the concentration of dominant economic functions. NCA's sub-centres have been intensely appropriated in the last three decades by key actors: on the one hand, local conglomerates mainly centred in the finance sector; and on the other hand, foreign capitals that are focused on food and brewages, technology, entertainment and finance.

Drawing on statistics developed by Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce<sup>245</sup>, most of the local actors that dominate the financial sector as well as major Colombian economic associations have placed their main offices within NCA. This can be observed through concrete numbers. Whilst the 77% of the leading firms of the city (which in most of the cases are the leading firms of the country) are located in the NCA, only 23% are situated within the HMC, particularly in the *Centro Internacional*. Nevertheless, this quantitative characteristic of reality contrasts to a qualitative aspect addressed above as 'the prevailing semiotic use of the ISI's empirical-C.B.D'. This is because the biggest Colombian conglomerates, which are associated or ascribed to the FDB<sup>246</sup>, have their

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<sup>244</sup> For more specific numbers regarding the "traditional city centre" see Jaramillo (2012).

<sup>245</sup> See *Las 500 Empresas más grandes de Bogotá en el 2005*. Cámara de comercio de Bogotá (2006).

<sup>246</sup> For example Colpatría or the Grupo AVAL owned by Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo.

headquarters in the *Centro Internacional*, not in the NCA<sup>247</sup>. Major national companies also maintain their head office in the *Centro Internacional*, specifically *Ecopetrol*<sup>248</sup> that is installed in the area known as the *Sagrado Corazón* (which defines the northern border of this sub-centre) nearby the office building of the *Banco de Bogotá* i.e. the main bank of the *Grupo AVAL* that emerged from the FDB's configuration. It highlights the fact that both, economic conglomerates and *Ecopetrol*, have kept the office buildings erected in the previous phase of urban centrality where their main offices operate with no aesthetical modifications.

Fig. 130. Indexical signs and headquarters within the *Centro Internacional* (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

The localization pattern of the headquarters of the main transnational companies installed in Colombia<sup>249</sup> follows the localization trend of the majority of the leading Colombian firms, not that of the most powerful ones. Therefore, the head offices of Disney, Nokia and Microsoft are located in the proximities of the *Avenida Chile*, and Intel is located at the *Calle 100*, an avenue that goes in east-west direction within the NCA that has attracted diverse offices such as banking, embassies, etc. Conversely, IBM and General Electric's head offices are placed at the borders of NCA in north-west direction in an office complex surrounded by parking lots and in a shopping mall,

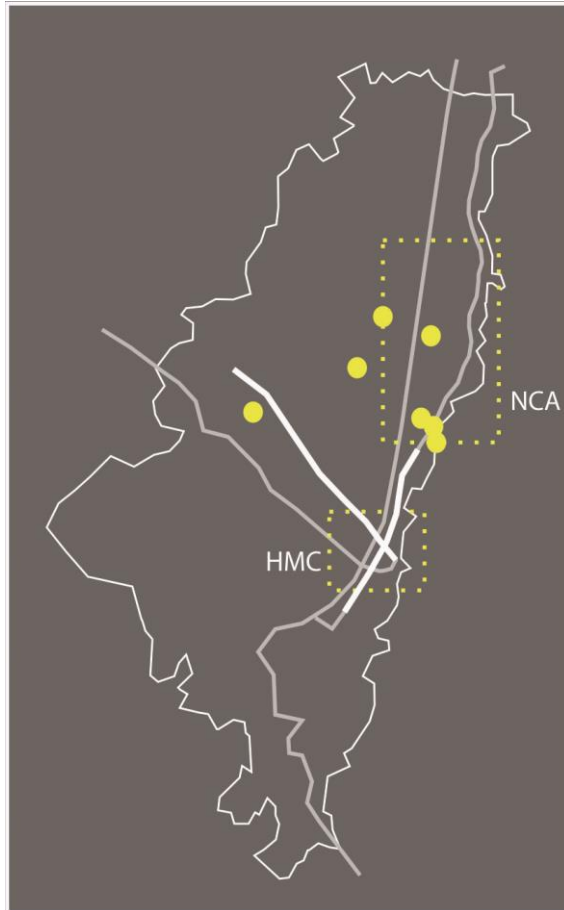
<sup>247</sup> In this context, we refer to headquarters located in Colombia. Conglomerates related to the FDB have grown in such a manner that these groups also have dependencies in international business centres such as New York.

<sup>248</sup> Ecopetrol S.A. is the largest company in the country and the principal petroleum company in Colombia.

<sup>249</sup> The seven main transnational companies in Colombia according to Bogotá's Chamber of commerce (2006) are Coca-Cola, Microsoft, IBM, General Electric, Intel, Nokia and Disney.

respectively. Finally Coca-Cola, as an exception, chose to situate itself nearby the airport.

Fig. 131. Location of headquarters of foreign capitals



Source: Own elaboration

When regarding local and foreign big capitals, more and more office buildings of foreign firms, powerful local organisations and companies that are related to the FDB are present within the CAN area and *Ciudad Salitre*, in the city's east-west axis. For example, international hotel chains, business facilities (e.g. Marriot International), the *Ciudad Empresarial* (business city) and office buildings of banks that belong to the biggest economic group led by Luis Carlos Sarmineto Angulo (the most powerful lord of the FDB) e.g. *Banco Popular* which belongs to the Grupo AVAL) and Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce headquarters. However, considering the functional and representational weight of this sector in reference to the original city centre area and the NCA, it becomes clear that it can neither be defined as a competing major central area nor as a part of these two main agglomerations.



Fig. 132. Increasing localization of capitals within *Ciudad Salitre* and CAN (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

For instance, when considering commuter dynamics this node captures only 26,250 trips i.e. almost the half of the journeys that catches the linear sub-centre that links NCA and the HMC. Moreover, the area *CAN/Ciudad Salitre* is not a subject of graphic, written or verbal representation as the other central areas and sub-centres<sup>250</sup>. From our perspective, this lack of narrative around this key sector is surprising considering its potential to construct memory through spaces such as the CAN. Within the surrounding areas there are also singular open spaces, key institutions as well as tourist attractions that have been planned and that could be used ‘to promote’ the city in various ways by public or private actors for different purposes.

These characteristics of the area *CAN/Ciudad Salitre* contrast to NCA’s dominant functional dynamics and its representational potential. The NCA is a bustling central area where most of the production of office space takes place as well as ‘signifying’ processes which have been partly identified above (e.g. the creation of this central area within the instalment of a new space production system led by the FDB). In this regard, there are key semiotic aspects that are worth discussing, especially in relation to the city cores produced within the previous phase of urban centrality.

On the one hand, the spatial objects and arrangements developed in the NCA feature the city’s newer spatial aesthetics which refer to prestige and power. Yet, these spaces of the NCA cannot compare to the vertical core of the HMC i.e. the *Centro Internacional* that is visually complemented and ‘represented’ together with the sacral

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<sup>250</sup> This aspect will be addressed further below.



peaks of *Montserrat* and *Guadalupe*. This condition reinforces and even ‘blesses’ the C.B.D’s iconic representation of economic power via the historically sacralised mountainous background which has been religiously symbolised in a dominant manner since the times of *La Encomienda* (see fig. 120). On the other hand, the *Centro Internacional* and the newer, but much lower, office buildings erected within the NCA are also dominated by local conglomerates. This occurs in spite of the actual presence of transnational capitals which, in the end, do not dominate ‘visually’ any point of Bogotá’s cityscape. Neither constructions that entail powerful spatial conventions (e.g. verticality, great heights, etc.) nor architectural labelling of multinationals are recognizable or repetitively represented in the city (e.g. via postcards, official documents, city-marketing, etc.).

Nevertheless, the NCA’s different cores do have a ‘semiotic’ potential. As mentioned above, the NCA embodies key representational aspects that define the last phase of urban centrality in Bogotá. Three sub-centres of NCA are worth revising in this regard.

The first one is the core developed at the cross road of the *Avenida Chile* and the *Carrera Séptima* where the UPAC’s and FDB’s foundational signs were established (mainly the AC). The intersection is marked by Colombia’s Stock Exchange building (institution that used to be located in the former city’s east-west axis - the *Avenida Jiménez*), the *Mazuera tower* described above, the headquarters of the Insurance Company *Generali* (historically located in Colombia) and a further exclusive office tower marked with labels of FDB’s financial institutions. All buildings (except *Generali*’s headquarters) host local conglomerates’ offices and are branded with the emblems of their banks e.g. the banks of the *Grupo AVAL*: *Banco de Occidente*, *Banco AV Villas* as well as *Davivienda*, an institution created within the take-off of the UPAC system. This space is supported by nearby offices of international banks such as the BBVA which, in spite of having its own building, does not dominate the cityscape in this area. There are also hotels of international chains and expensive restaurants which have been emerging in the last years.

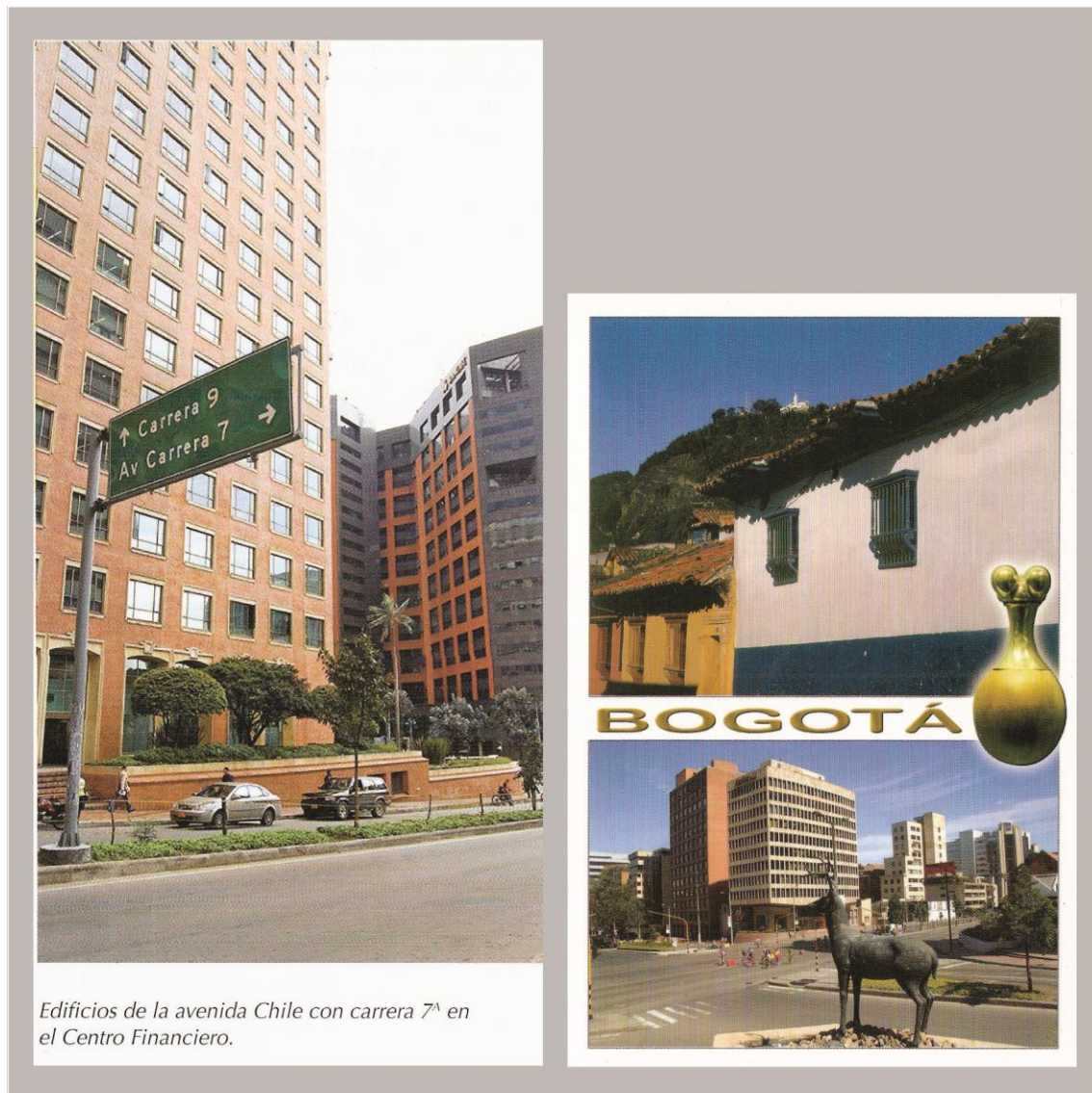
Fig. 133. *Avenida Chile* city core (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

When considering the representation of this empirical-C.B.D in the sightseeing industry, it is possible to observe several aspects that prove its increasing representational potential. To begin with, images of this central space are used to relate ‘showable’ traditional and modern spaces in Bogotá. This can be identified in postcards as well as in tourist guides where group images of the crossroad *Avenida Chile/Carrera Séptima* show pictures of cores or singular spaces of the HMC. This relationship has been traditionally established with the *Centro Internacional* that still dominates typical graphic representations of the city along with the sacral peaks of *Monserate* and *Guadalupe*. However, more recently it is possible to see tourism products that symmetrically display towers of this sub-centre of the NCA with ‘colonial’ houses as well as institutional buildings that define *La Plaza de Bolívar*’s area. This form of representing spaces appears as a significant association that links two remote or geographically distant central spaces: the first one is created in the last phase of urban centrality, and the second is composed of spatial signs of *La Hacienda*. As such, the promotion of urban uniqueness becomes increasingly defined by the selection and display of key signifiers of the ‘authoritarian’ colonial spatial ensemble and of current ‘monopolist’ economic powers. Alternative sources of differentiation are concealed or weakly exposed within this highly influential identity-making business, for example public spaces configured within marginal neighbourhoods (which define much of Bogotá’s built space), Bogotá’s new libraries (community centres) which have been built in the last years in peripheral areas that could communicate practices related to collective local identities, social change, knowledge, communication, etc.

Fig. 134. *Avenida Chile* in postcards and tourist guides



Source: Own elaboration based on Cosmoguías Ltda. (2010), Ediciones Monserrate and Editorial Everest (2008)

We also want to highlight the rather ‘empty character’ as well as the environmental and social impressions of ‘cleanness’ displayed through the postcards of C.B.Ds located in the NCA such as the *Avenida Chile* city core (see fig. 134). The pictures of these postcards are taken on a sunny Sunday morning when the *Carrera Séptima* is closed for private cars and is opened to cyclists and pedestrians who are a part of the middle and upper middle social sectors. This image depicts a distorted reality. For instance, this contrasts to the rest of the week, where the streets of these cores are used by every socio-cultural groups, classes, etc. who are all stuck in

debilitating commuter dynamics<sup>251</sup>. As a result, everyday appropriation practices are concealed by postcards and with it the notion of ‘otherness’ that is inherent to urban centrality. This practice of ‘concealment’ includes, among other aspects, the act of hiding humble recyclers, street vendors who find appropriate customers (e.g. clerks, low and middle class students, workers, and sometimes upper social sectors) in strategic spots located next to international franchises (e.g. Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, etc.) and bus stops of an informal transport system which supports the absence of urban and regional connections for such a strong urban node.

Fig. 135. Everyday appropriation within the *Avenida Chile* city core (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

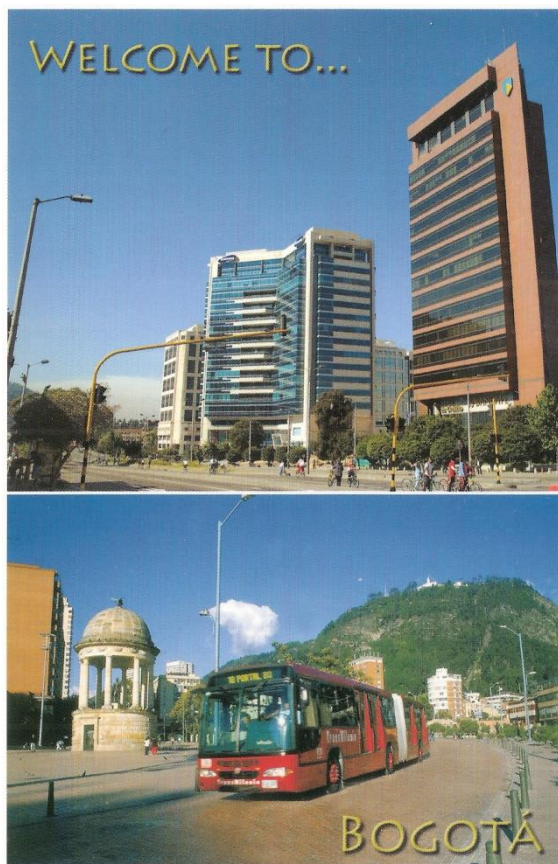
However, the ‘neat’ environment exposed in these postcards is actually achieved in other sub-centres that are located much more into the NCA. This observation leads us to our second example which is an empirical-C.B.D defined by a mall and a group of towers built by actors ascribed to the FDB. This sub-centre is located within the old *Resguardo* of *Usaquén* at the cross roads of the *Carrera Séptima* (Camino Viejo) and

<sup>251</sup> General mobility and accessibility dynamics will be presented in detail further bellow.



the *Avenida Pepe Sierra*. In contrast to the centre of the *Avenida Chile* that emerged from the transformation and aggregation of former residential lots, this core started from the construction of whole architectural units that were arranged progressively at the old town of *Usaquén*, the *Carrera Séptima* and at a linear square that was planned along with further office towers that host a mixture of local conglomerates offices (mainly bank branches) and working spaces of foreign capitals as well as diplomatic representations of different countries.

Fig. 136. Postcard combining *Monserate* and the C.B.D.  
at the crossroads of the *Carrera Séptima* and the *Avenida Pepe Sierra*



Source: Cosmoguías Ltda. (2010)

The location and treatment of key spatial elements in this sub-centre have been strategically developed. On the one hand, the mall *Centro Comercial Hacienda Santa Bárbara* (1989) was literally ‘plugged’ to the street that leads to the central square of *Usaquén* which is characterised by the old church and expensive ‘themed’ restaurants that have emerged in the last years. On the other hand, the group of office towers known as the *Centro Empresarial Santa Bárbara* has grown according to key punctual

interventions, specifically the initial business complex named *Teleport Business Park* (1997) developed within the UPAC figure<sup>252</sup> nearby the main house of the former *hacienda Santa Bárbara* that was ‘carefully integrated’ within the design and completion of the mall.

Fig. 137. Plan of C.B.D. *Centro Empresarial Santa Bárbara* (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

Since the end of the 1990s, this *Centro Empresarial* has included additional office towers of about 17 storeys heavily guarded by private security companies that host headquarters of companies like Samsung, numerous embassies (Czech Republic, European Union, Canada, Organization of the American States, India, Japan and Mexico) as well as exclusive shops and money exchange offices, a new mall where the transnational Carrefour is located, a convention centre, banks, a bio-supermarket, financial services and travel agencies, etc. This arrangement is bordered by a former train station (west), a private/exclusive clinic (north) and by ‘back to back’ residential developments as well as underused or deteriorated play fields (south).

<sup>252</sup> In regard to the financial dynamics of office space in this period see Saldarriaga’s general observations (2006: 199ff).

Fig. 138. Street view of C.B.D Centro Empresarial Santa Bárbara (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

The seeming civic appearance of the surroundings and the apparent neat image presented in postcards were unmasked through observations and experiences during field work: whilst a man of humble origins was literally kicked out of the mall, the researcher of the present work (whose aspect matches a typical middle class person in Colombia) was intimidated by security guards because of taking pictures of the furniture of the open linear space left between the towers. The guards claimed that this area (which is not physically gated) ‘was not public space’ and therefore it was not subjected to be photographed and demanded aggressively for me to hand over the memory card of the camera. Interestingly, this core is spatially represented by the city administration (2010) as a friendly ‘tourist and cultural attraction’. The logo used to sell this discourse comprises of a silhouette composed by the outline of the office buildings and of the façade of the *hacienda*’s main house that is complemented with the shape of a business man that appears higher than the C.B.Ds towers. Indeed a meaningful representation for a space marked by the agency of *La Encomienda*, *La Hacienda* and ultimately by the modernised version of these associative structures that ends up privileging an economic elite.



Fig. 139. *Usaquén* tourism logo (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

Further cores of the NCA have developed in a similar way and present similar appropriation practices. This is the case of our third example: the *Calle 100* Avenue. This core was developed from major real estate interventions related to the configuration of the FDB. This space was defined by the construction in 1986 of a ‘World Trade Center’ associated to the WTCA<sup>253</sup> built by Cemco Ltda i.e. the same developers’ firm that created the *Teleport Business Park* at the *hacienda Santa Bárbara*. With the introduction of this elite ‘business promoting project’, the area shifted from a high class residential area marked by military infrastructure (a school, an armoury, etc.) to a sub-centre restricted to particular services such as exclusive medical services and administrative offices of the privatized Colombian medical system, language schools, diverse entities like key embassies (e.g. Chile, China, etc.) and related official offices (e.g. the main office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) as well as office towers that host the headquarters of foreign banking institutions, for example the Chilean Banking group – CorpBanca and the Spanish bank *Banco Santander*.

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<sup>253</sup> World Trade Centers Association [www.wtca.org](http://www.wtca.org)

Fig. 140. Postcard *Calle 100*



Source: Cosmoguías Ltda. (2010)

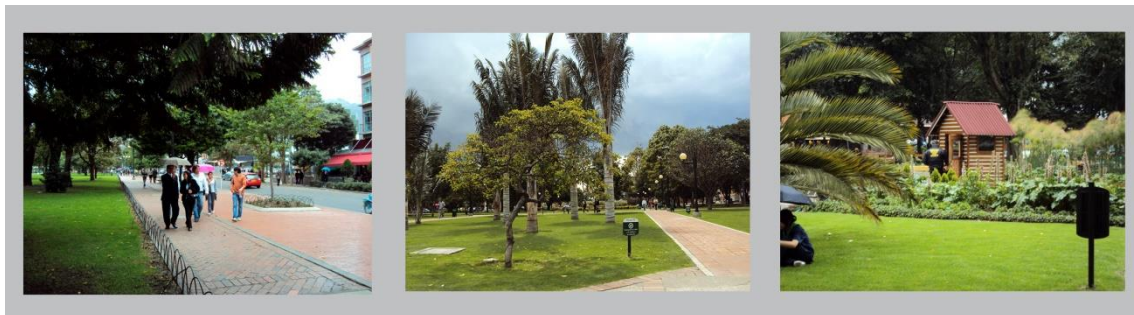
Fig. 141. World Trade Center surroundings (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

This dense sector of the *Calle 100*, which tends to remain free of informal commercial activity and ‘unwanted’ public, is affected by the small but trendy *Parque de la 93* (Park on 93<sup>rd</sup> Street) which is characterised by its expensive restaurants, hotels, night clubs, etc. but also by discriminatory practices which are much more institutionalised than those observed in *Santa Bárbara*’s empirical-C.B.D. For example, a prohibition to move around observed during field work that is a phenomenon that has been highlighted by some media such as the *Revista Semana* (08-05-2008). This national magazine identified the exclusion of unwanted groups or individuals according to criteria set by private security companies that are hired by the park’s neighbours and traders who have also deliberately suppressed cultural activities that might attract other sectors of the population to this park e.g. the temporary instalment of ice rinks during Christmas time.

Fig. 142. *Parque de la 93* (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

However, this sort of control of public in such strong central points is hard to maintain. Within the opposite extreme point of the *Calle 100* i.e. towards west (which is defined by a bridge intersection with the *Autopista Norte*) numerous services have emerged with intensity. These services function in exclusive office buildings that host the working space of many private organisms, for example, *Suramericana* which is part of a typical conglomerate of the FDB that emerged in the context of the UPAC figure in the 1970s (the *Grupo Bolívar*).

In contrast to the eastern extreme point of the *Calle 100*, businessmen have to share sidewalks with a lot of informal vendors who satisfy the demand of numerous users of this node who belong to almost all the social sectors of the population. The need of these informal services is so strong that the city administration pays a daily



instalment and removal of sanitary units which are placed on the opposite side of the *Autopista Norte* next to the stairs of a pedestrian bridge that connects the new towers with an always crowded BRTS station.

Fig. 143. Office buildings. Western end of *Calle 100* (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

Fig. 144. Western end of *Calle 100*. Space appropriation (2010)



Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, it is worth noting that renewed spatial discourses of the 1980s such as the above mentioned ‘mall-housing package’ appear in a renewed form in this area

demarcated by numerous real estate advertisements. Specifically, we observed commercial messages that associate this area of the NCA with a sort of ‘C.B.D-suburbia package’. In this sense, field work made it possible to identify a series of slogans that together composed a true “locational oriented ideology” (Gottdiener, 1986a) of suburbanization: for example, there are messages that address the reality of everyday commuting from the point of view of the location of working space: ‘if your office would be here, you would have already arrived’. These sorts of messages are supplemented with other mottos that stimulate the desire to soften this exhausting reality of traffic jams and congestion by selling, at the same time, the typical image of good sub-urban life but in local terms: *¡Fincas en conjunto cerrado a solo una hora!* i.e. gated farms/*haciendas* just an hour away!

Fig. 145. Real estate advertisements within the *Calle 100* area (2009)



Source: Own elaboration

In sum, the sprawling and merging process of empirical-C.B.Ds is a typical phenomenon of the last phase of urban centrality in Bogotá. This process starts in the 1980s according to the location of key contemporary spatial signs, and ends up configuring what we call the NCA at the end of the 2000s. NCA is a major, but also complementary, central area that develops next to the HMC. The connection of the NCA to the HMC (i.e. the central area that develops within the ‘historical moments of urban centrality’) is a linear sub-centre that provides different services. The NCA, the HMC and the linear sub-centre configure a ‘fragmented supercentre’ which is characterised by spatial juxtaposition and the linear arrangement of its different components. The area known as the CAN that is attached to the city’s east-west axis

completes the main spatial structure which can be addressed as a complex spatial texture. This texture is open to 'structural interpretation' which will be developed in the following chapter and its final diagram.

## 7. Decoding spatial fragmentation

The aim of this final chapter is to summarise and integrate the findings exposed throughout the different moments of urban centrality in Bogotá. This ‘integration of contents’ completes the process of “structural semiosis” (Hassenpflug, 2010) which involves the ‘de-coding’ of our main object of study i.e. Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration.

In order to accomplish this objective it is necessary to review some of our main theoretical considerations and postulations. The actualization of centrality involves the exercise and representation of authority. This phenomenon becomes a critical issue in a reality rooted in colonialism and characterised by the endurance of highly conflictive power relations. In the case of Colombian society, the endeavours of the dominant communitarian associative structure to remain as organising model and, at the same time, modernise itself has produced a rather fragmented spatial textures whose main referent is Bogotá’s ‘super-centre’. As a complex spatial texture, this centre comprises a set of spatial signifiers that iconically, indexically and symbolically denote key signifieds. These are signifieds that are subjected to decoding and that offer pathways to understanding the city’s essential meaning which, in Barthes’ words, refers to society’s “actual discourse” (Barthes, 1986).

To begin with, the central space *Plaza de Bolívar* appears as an iconic sign of *La Hacienda*’s values at the end of the last moment of urban centrality. The main morphological features of this space communicate the main characteristics of the a-temporal and ideal power structure conceived within the formation of the republic in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is a structure that fitted the preferences of the ruling communitarian association of *La Hacienda*. In this sense the interrelation of the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s spatial conventions iconically denotes the ‘sacralisation of the concentration of power’. This is a ‘signified’ that is constantly reproduced through the naturalization of the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s spatial aesthetics and the corresponding maintenance of the original or primary function of this core i.e. the exercise of authority. These are the characteristics of a true spatial icon of ‘authoritarianism’ that facilitates hegemonic processes around vertical and static forms of power which persist in social practice.



However, the ‘spatial representativeness’ of this strong sign within the general spatial arrangement is paradoxically weakened. This weakening is a tendency inherited from the previous moment of urban centrality and consists in the further deterioration of the ‘indexical value of centrality’ of this political-religious centre. Such deterioration is related to the consolidation of the east-west axis (the *calle 26*) and the *Centro Internacional* as well as the emergence of strong empirical-C.B.Ds within northern city quarters. This configuration makes the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s area even more dependent to the historically stronger north-south axis. In this context the central area *Plaza de Bolívar* relates only ‘linearly’ to the other prevailing cores of Bogotá’s spatial structure and therefore the spatial hierarchy of the *Plaza de Bolívar* is seriously affected. Daily spatial practices do not develop concentrically around it and hence the status of ‘city centre’ (which merges spatial, social and geographical properties) becomes removed and displaced within the last moment of urban centrality.

Conversely, the *Plaza the Bolívar*’s immediate neighbour faces structural changes during the last decades. We refer to Bogotá’s political-C.B.D which is covered by dust. Dominant actors in the last moment of urban centrality neither continue to use this core’s monumentality, nor extend it. However, the political-C.B.D has a semiotic value in spite that, at present, it barely provides accessibility to the original city centre area and appears functional to secondary governmental and service/commercial activities. Such semiotic value is related to the maintenance of the political-C.B.D’s original ‘presentative characteristics’ which makes it a ‘symbolic sign’ of an association of dominant actors that do not longer exist. It is barely a symbol of a social strategy that became useless in the 1980s to those in power i.e. the ISI. This characterisation does not deny the political C.B.D’s current functional value. This linear sub-centre is directly linked to the former and to the new east-west axis (i.e. the *Calle 13* and the *Calle 26*) which provides this C.B.D a potential ‘indexical value’ of centrality. However, the command functions that this centre once concentrated are located somewhere else. In addition, the political-C.B.D is no longer represented as ‘centre’ as it used to be in previous decades by the city administration or the tourist industry<sup>254</sup>.

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<sup>254</sup> We focused our attention in the political-C.B.D instead of the core that developed around the crossroad *Avenida Jiménez/Carrera Séptima* because of the political-C.B.D’s structural characteristics. The conception and development of this sub-centre strongly influenced the linear configuration of Bogotá’s spatial structure and its history reveals much of the quarrels and compromises made within the highly conflictive modernisation of *La Hacienda*.

These conditions of the political-C.B.D do not apply to the *Centro Internacional* (or the ISI's empirical-C.B.D) which shares privileged accessibility conditions. The main company of the state is located within the surroundings of the *Centro Internacional* (i.e. the *Sagrado Corazón* area) and the *Centro*'s unique iconic characteristics are used by the new leading associative structure in power i.e. the FDB. Thus, the private sector takes advantage of the position in spatial/visual terms and locates the headquarters of its diversified and increasingly consolidated firms in the city's tallest towers which are labelled with these firms' emblems. This is a representation of potential and incontestable power which is 'consecrated' by the great height and verticality of *La Hacienda*'s sacral peaks (*Montserrat* and *Guadalupe*) that compose the background of the *Centro Internacional*. In addition, the *Centro Internacional* has an advantageous location which makes this core more accessible at the local, regional and international scales than any other city core in the country.

All these characteristics enhance the HMC's indexical and iconic values of centrality. This enhancement takes place in a particular manner: if in the Plaza de Bolívar the traditional political power is 'sacralised' through the interplay of spatial conventions and practices, the monopolist power is 'blessed' within the *Centro Internacional* that is complemented by the undisturbed divine authority signified by the iconic sacral peaks which visually dominate the whole spatial arrangement. The correlation of iconic, indexical and symbolic meanings transmitted by secular and sacral elements makes this heterogeneous configuration of signifiers (i.e. *La Hacienda*'s Modernising Centre - HMC) the main spatial sign of the steadiness and upheavals of *La Hacienda*'s highly conflictive 'modernisation'.

Within the structural conditions of the last phase of urban centrality, the HMC's spatial hierarchy appears seriously counteracted. As depicted above, *La Hacienda*'s contradictory modernisation required new strategies to reproduce, and for that purpose, created a complementary core that redefined the city's spatial hierarchies: the NCA. This major central area emerges as both, as a by-product and as an instrument of the new space production system which essentially required the liberalization of land uses. The office space of this major central area serves for the management of a considerable amount of information which resulted from the transfer of the monopoly of services from the state to the empowered private sector.

The NCA is a central space developed within a rapid pace of growth and profit-oriented processes. However, this new central area should not be considered strictly as a brute or meaningless outcome of real estate dynamics. Spatial components of the NCA refer to historical as well as current social relations of production and consumption. For example, the NCA's layout is composed by a network of avenues or motorways developed upon a rural morphology inherited from the times of *La Encomienda* and *La Hacienda*. The NCA's image of functionalism and modernity is in this regard apparent since technical requirements did not determine the configuration of the layout of this central area. Conversely, the spatial configuration was mostly informed by land property issues which are related to pre-modern relations of power. Moreover, malls and empirical-C.B.Ds are located in particular spots of the NCA that are associated to spaces of power and prestige that developed in previous historical moments e.g. the *Club el Country*, the *Gimnasio Moderno* and the *hacienda Santa Barbara* which were located nearby or integrated to malls such as *Unicentro*, the *Centro Comercial Santa Bárbara*, and the AC.

These socio-spatial conditions suggest the meaningful character of the NCA which emerges as both, a particular spatial structure and a space of concentration of prevailing spatial practices i.e. of power. Key buildings and spatial arrangements located within the NCA can therefore be acknowledged as 'spatial signs' which are functionally and semiotically useful to encourage the main practices within the new structural conditions: consumerism, privatization of space, de-regulation, etc. In addition, it is observed that particular nodes of the NCA are promoted through images of tourism and corporatism which reinforces the fact that this central area increasingly takes part of 'urban imaging' processes.

Nonetheless, the true impact of the NCA is connected to the functional dimension of space. This new central area concentrates much of the city's dynamics in terms of commuting, flows of labour power, organisation, networking, etc. This functional hierarchy entails that the NCA does not concentrate or organise 'counteracting' iconic signifiers of knowledge, religiosity, or political power which are essential within collective identity processes. We refer to a lack of central spaces in the NCA that could organise facilities such as libraries, cultural centres, university campuses, temples or public institutions of national or regional hierarchy similar to those concentrated within the HMC. In addition, the NCA generates as much

commuting as the HMC and monopolizes construction activities, especially office space for the financial sector where key decision making takes place.

This situation contrasts to the NCA's dependency in terms of 'spatial representativeness'. Despite the prestige and functional hierarchy of the NCA, the leading actors and institutions of the FDB (i.e. the NCA's main producers) require the vertical iconicity of the *Centro Internacional* (located within the HMC) to represent the stability and solidity of their businesses. As mentioned above neither multinationals (in a context of strong liberalization) nor major firms of the state visually dominate this key spatial sign. This occurs also in the alternative sub-centre that is just emerging within the CAN area and *Ciudad Salitre* at the new east-west axis. Within this functionalist and fragmentarily distributed sub-centre, members of the FDB are running other forms of C.B.Ds that accommodate buildings of some multinational firms. Yet these firms do not represent the main foreign capitals that are present in Colombia. As described above, the headquarters of main foreign capitals are located nearby the airport or the NCA without exercising any visual dominance within the cityscape.

According to this analysis, Bogotá's spatial structure is composed by two major central areas (the NCA and the HMC) that are linked through a linear sub-centre<sup>255</sup>. This description illuminates a spatial structure that, in fact, involves a rather fragmentary distribution of functional and semiotic characteristics of urban centrality. However, this description is not yet satisfactory. We need to de-code such fragmentary condition that challenges the process of structural semiosis. Therefore, what we need to comprehend the Latin American case of Bogotá is "to embed" (Hassenpflug, 2010: 142) within a structural framework our particular findings about the meanings of the different components of Bogotá's spatial structure (i.e. the city's major central areas, sub-centres, axes, layouts, etc.). Hence, let us review some basic definitions in order to orientate our final analysis.

We posited in the above conceptual framework that the act of creating a 'centre' has to do with the establishment and maintenance of certain power relations through the organisation of space. From this standpoint, Bogotá's super-centre tends to accomplish its primary objective. Each sub-centre of the spatial arrangement not only develops an essential function but also denotes key signifieds related to prevailing social relations.

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<sup>255</sup> See description of this linear element in chapter 6.2.2.

However, further interpretative challenges emerge when considering in detail our definition of ‘urban centrality’. According to our conceptual considerations, urban centrality refers to ‘the organization of spatial symbolism’ and the primary function of this organisation is to ‘stabilize material as well as semiotic socio-spatial relations’. In this regard, the main problem in the case of Bogotá is that none of the main central areas and their respective sub-centres can be truly defined as Bogotá’s ‘city centre’. This problem involves a very unstable condition which presupposes that there is no centre (or agglomeration of sub-centres) from which the city’s material as well as representational dynamics hierarchically develops. Neither the HMC nor the NCA meet the necessary functional and semiotic (either iconic or indexical) preconditions to organise the whole spatial arrangement.

As we have already pointed out, this type of fragmented spatial condition cannot be explained simply from the effects of growth dynamics or de-regulation of land policies, as it has been argued. These are reductionist arguments that obscure the socio-cultural and historical dimensions of space production. The primary function of urban centrality mentioned above is met in complex urban systems created within divergent socio-cultural worlds in the context of globalization<sup>256</sup>. When approaching Bogotá’s spatial structure, we identify that the city’s spatial fragmentation lies on a strong contradiction between ‘accumulation’ and ‘reference’, essential components of urban centrality (see fig. 3). This contradiction of accumulation and reference emerges according to a sustained conflict in power relations and in the spatial representation of those relations. We refer to the unresolved tension between the enforced maintenance of *La Hacienda*’s values (community) and an actual modernisation (society) of the socio-spatial system.

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<sup>256</sup> For example, it is very difficult to contest that Beijing’s old town area prevails in functional and semiotic terms over the rest of centres and city quarters of the Chinese capital. Beijing’s axes or the “Great Cross” (Hassenpflug, 2010: 70), rooted in pre-modern ‘communitarian’ principles, prevails and organises other expressions of centrality within a bustling globalization process e.g. *Chang’an* street, new C.B.Ds, strategic interventions such as the Olympic park, etc. Tokyo’s “empty centre” (Barthes, 1982: 30f), occupied by a ‘divine authority’, is another example in this regard. Barthes’ (1982) analysis shows the incontestable semiotic but also functional hierarchy of this sacred centre which shapes concentrically the urban dynamics and disposition of sub-centres (e.g. *Ueno*, *Asakusa*, etc.) of one of the most powerful cities of modernity. On the other hand, the example of Berlin presents opposing historical processes of secularization (i.e. dynamics between community and society), and demonstrates a hierarchically balanced structure of central areas (Jiménez, 2007). In spite of having different historical and socio-political characteristics the *Alexanderplatz* area and *Kurfürstendamm* entail cultural, social, economic and political referents that all together define a clear concentric dynamic of the whole agglomeration. Lichtenberger’s (2002) analysis of the relationship between traditional centres and skylines of C.B.Ds within the European context becomes another example in this regard (for details about these examples see chapter two).

The general outcome is that the organisation of spatial symbolism i.e. urban centrality in Bogotá is based on the linear 'juxtaposition' of the city's main signifiers. This juxtaposition is the result of a spatial 'accumulation' process that lacks of a stable point of 'reference' with the potential to 'balance' the spatial organisation of collective practices in time. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991), the stabilization of the accumulation process responds to the 'dialectical movement of centrality' that consists in the "simultaneity of 'everything' that is susceptible of coming together - and thus of accumulating - [...] at a point or around that point" (Lefebvre, 1991: 332). In semiotic terms, this dialectic has to do with the presence of a spatial sign with a resilient 'indexical value of centrality' that aligns contradictory spaces (e.g. sacral and secular spaces, traditional and modern spaces, etc.) and their main social practices or collective habits i.e. the exercise of power, exchange, communication, spirituality, etc.

In Bogotá's urban history, such 'stabilization' or 'balancing' was sought through the introduction of the crown's main homogenizer spatial sign i.e. the grid with its central *plaza mayor*. However, the establishing and appropriation of this grid did not obliterate the spatial hierarchy of the core that had been already created by *La Encomienda* within the *plazuela de la yerba*. This *plazuela* was a highly significant space within the associative and productive practices of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was juxtaposed to the 'central' *plaza mayor* and aligned to the grid's north-south axis. The outcome was a 'linear-concentric' pattern that has been maintained within the different conjunctions and crises.

The formation of the republic according to *La Hacienda*'s values is a key reference in this regard. *La Hacienda*, as prevailing associative structure, 'appropriated' the spatial structure inherited from colonialism without 'transgressing' it. *La Hacienda* used the city's main signs according to its needs, mainly, the achieving of hegemony around static and vertical forms of authority. When *La Hacienda* had to deal socio-politically and spatially with unavoidable forces of modernisation, the oligarchical elite chose a strategy that failed: the 'political-C.B.D'. Both, the original city centre (i.e. the *Plaza de Bolívar*'s core) and the political-C.B.D 'were not susceptible of coming together' i.e. to overlap and configure a new spatial sign. This overlapping would have transgressed the prevailing historical spatial meanings that were functional to the hegemonic associative structure under menace i.e. *La Hacienda* in the 1940s and 1950s. This phenomenon that consists in the failure of *La Hacienda* to spatialize harmonically

its traditional and modern spatial signs and structures is what we call the ‘crisis of pre-modern urban centrality’ that developed from 1910s to 1970s.

This crisis of pre-modern urban centrality re-introduced the city’s historical ‘linear-concentric pattern’. The always stronger north-south axis accommodated the juxtaposition of sub-centres which involved the partial materialization of ‘modern urban centrality’ features. This materialization involved a strong opposition of main secular and sacral spatial signifiers. We refer to the opposition of the signifiers of ‘exchange processes’ and of politics-religiosity i.e. the political and empirical-C.B.Ds, on the one hand, and the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s central area on the other. These all together configured a major central area denominated in this research as the HMC – *La Hacienda*’s Modernising Centre.

Under the re-structuring conditions of the last moment of urban centrality, this linear-concentric pattern inherited from the crisis period is perpetuated and sharpened. On the one hand, the city’s spatial structure is characterised, as in the previous period of urban centrality, by the linear juxtaposition of the HMC’s cores that are affected by the strengthened east-west axis. We refer to the linear arrangement of the main spatial sign of *La Hacienda*’s socio-political power (i.e. the core *Plaza de Bolívar*) and the political and empirical- C.B.Ds of the ISI. And on the other hand, the structure’s linear-concentric pattern is reinforced by the side-by-side location of the (sacral-vertical) HMC and the emerging (secular-horizontal) Northern Central Area – the NCA. These two major central areas configure a ‘super-centre’ but require each other in functional and semiotic terms. While the HMC ‘consecrates’ the whole spatial structure and provides adequate representational spaces for the hegemonic economic and political groups, the NCA’s layout (defined by the rural spatiality of *La Encomienda* and *La Hacienda*) accommodates the functionally required empirical-C.B.Ds and related signs of power and prestige (e.g. the *Club El Country*) to reproduce the ‘monopolistic’ socio-economic system.

The combination of the HMC and the NCA within a single spatial unit i.e. Bogotá’s super-centre denotes the sacralisation of a total form of authority or, in other words, the ‘sacralisation of authoritarianism’. This sacralisation is essentially linked to the hegemonic and almost deific power of elites. This sort of authority allows a constant empowerment of privileged actors through the traditional politics of *La Hacienda*.



These actors in the last phase of urban centrality are agglutinated in the FDB i.e. the associative structure that dominates major space production processes. The FDB is not subordinated to the exercise of politics within the established republican and democratic system. Likewise their main representational spaces (NCA and the ISI's empirical-C.B.D – the *Centro Internacional*) are not subordinated, neither in spatial nor semiotic terms, to the core of politics. These central spaces of the FDB tend to have a greater functional and representational hierarchy and essentially compose the decision-making structure. In this regard, Bogotá's supercentre is a true expression and an instrument of a monopolist, post-modern mode of production rooted in spatial practices of the “*capitalismo hacendatario*” (Guillén, 1979). Within the super-centre, semiotic values of colonialism are re-introduced in combination to a capitalist space i.e. the C.B.D. This supercentre is a complex central space that, in order to be maintained, requires the naturalization of pre-modern spatial aesthetics as well as the strengthening and generalization of spatial and cultural strategies such as the C.B.Ds.

Thus Bogotá, as main spatial signifier of Colombia's society, presents a significant and complex spatial unit. The primary meaning of this unit, ‘the sacralisation of authoritarianism’, is strongly related to an unstable but effective spatial code that supports the maintenance of structural communitarian values. These are the values of *La Hacienda* which violently resist emancipation, particularly, the practical and semiotic separation of powers, the democratization and distribution of economic and cultural assets which have been socially and geographically over-concentrated. The following ‘diagram’ summarises the contents developed in this chapter.

Club El Country

Unicentro

Empirical C.B.D.s

AC and Porciuncula

BOGOTÁ'S FRAGMENTED SUPER-CENTRE

sacralization of authoritarianism

'Centro Internacional'

consecrated empirical C.B.D.

Iconic C.B.D. image 'monopolist power'

F.D.B.'s headquarters

La Hacienda's Sacred Peaks

un-disturbed divine authority

La Hacienda's Sacred Peaks

un-disturbed divine authority

Iconic sign of La Hacienda's values

H. M. C.

sacral, vertical

Political C.B.D. 'symbolic sign' of the ISI and its associative structures

Functional and fragmentary decentralization F.D.B. - C.B.D.s

East-West Axis

critical 'fissure'

Airport

Av. Chile

Av. Rep. Sierra

Calle 100

Calle 127

Calle 134

N. C. A.

secular - horizontal

N.C.A.'s Layout

'rural spatiality' of La Encomienda & La Hacienda

LINKING LINEAR SUB-CENTRE

Compass rose: North arrow pointing towards the top-left.

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## Concluding Remarks

The research strategy of reading semiotically 'urban centrality' allows for the comprehension of the highly fragmented and contradictory condition of urban space in Latin America. The case study of Bogotá proves that there is a (unstable) spatial code which has provided cohesiveness to the main components of the city. This quality of cohesion involves that Bogotá's spatial structure is a meaningful historical product of the practices and representations of dominant associative structures which is open to interpretation. Therefore, this study discusses the generalized idea that the main centres in Latin America are weakened and pathological entities, spaces with no structural coherence that converge towards a general type of globalized spatiality.

Thus, the convergence perspective defined within the 'Modernisation Theory' appears to be mistaken. This perspective is reductive and identifies urban space to be either illegible or meaningless entity and, in so doing, dissolves its very object of study. On the contrary, we stress that modern or contemporary elements and tendencies cannot be spatialized without the coordinates or parameters of pre-existent 'communitarian' arrangements which re-elaborate, incorporate and contextualise those globalizing trends. Latin American cities are not just a chaotic sum of standardised malls, gated communities, C.B.D.s, etc. These cities have a particular history and incorporate such global trends within specific and co-existing socio-spatial structures. Furthermore, we attempt to overcome the limits of the 'Dependent Urbanization' approach which cannot de-code the complex configuration of central spaces. First, the analysis made within this approach overestimates the influence of external actors and social forces. Secondly, the emphasis on social struggle and aggression to spatial signs disregards the fact that these dynamics are subtended by hegemonic processes, alliances and therefore from consensus. Thus, there is no informative spatial characterisation because the authors who represent this line of reasoning tend to reduce urban centres to deformed and disjoint structures associated to what they call the irrationalities of capitalism.

Our analysis emphasises the internal processes and power relations that characterises the field of 'Latin American Urban Culture'. Attention is paid to the permeation of communitarian and societal codes in history as essential elements to read urban space. We reconstruct the spatial configuration process of Bogotá and de-code the signals transmitted by its spatial structure which is mainly composed by (sub)centres,

axes and other spatial signs. Our structural interpretation of those signals transformed them into spatial meanings connected to sign relations; specifically, the relations between the components of *La Hacienda's* Modernising Centre (HMC) and the Northern Central Area (NCA) which are the two major central areas that together compose Bogotá's 'fragmented supercentre'. This is a paradoxical concept that refers to an intrinsic or specific 'logic of concentration' that emerges from a historical process characterised by unresolved social tensions but that at the same time succeeds in spatially representing and reproducing the established societal order.

This historical process started with the creation of a noble city type in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and developed according to the (re)production of spatial codes related to authoritarianism. Within this phenomenon there was a key juncture: the formation of the republic in the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century according to the values of *La Hacienda*, a communitarian associative structure that rules socio-spatial relations. The establishment of this regime required the use of spatial signs of authority created within the Spanish colony and therefore *La Hacienda* appropriated Bogotá as its main core of power. Dominant semiotic characteristics of Bogotá's spatial structure were strategically used to introduce new spatial signs e.g. the Capitol without jeopardizing the 'representative condition' of the highly useful spatial signs inherited from the previous period (mainly, the former *plaza mayor* with its meaningful spatial conventions). Subsequently, the world of *La Hacienda* fell into a strong tension that we call 'the crisis of pre-modern urban centrality' which started in the 1910s and lasted until the 1970s. This period was informed but not determined by the emergence of industrial capitalism and the world financial and monetary crisis of 1929. According to our framework, this crisis essentially responded to an enforced maintenance of communitarian values within a selective and elitist modernisation process associated to the ISI.

In this context, a set of socio-spatial strategies were applied within Bogotá's city centre such as the creation of a political-C.B.D. Those strategies failed and involved deep contradictions that led to a fragmentation of the city's urban centrality configuration. Such fragmentation consisted in the opposition of noble and modern spatial textures reaching its peak point in the 1970s. In this decade, the city's spatial structure was characterised by the juxtaposition of the dominant spatial signs (i.e. the main sub-centres) and the creation of a new east-west axis. The sub-centres were the *Plaza de Bolívar's* central area, which stood as the traditional merge of 'politics-

religiosity', and the spatial arrangement composed of the political-C.B.D and the empirical-C.B.D. Both C.B.Ds were the representational space of the new associations and the place where the 'exchange' processes needed to run the ISI model took place. The new east-west axis (the *Calle 26*) converged onto these two C.B.Ds and reinforced their spatial hierarchy creating an arrangement with no clear 'indexical value of centrality' (i.e. none of the existent sub-centres and axes organised hierarchically the whole spatial arrangement).

This pattern of spatial fragmentation is reinforced during the last moment of urban centrality. This phenomenon is informed by a highly conflictive consolidation of dominant actors' position within the societal structure which is now characterised by a new associative structure that monopolises space production: the Financier – urban Developer Bloc (FDB). The emergence of this association essentially required the de-regulation of land uses and the (re)organisation of the built environment which started to be characterised by different forms of sprawl and re-densification. In this context, the FDB introduced within the space production process postmodern city centre ideal types (e.g. empirical-C.B.Ds, malls, etc.) to encourage practices that are functional to the new systemic conditions such as physical expansion, privatization, de-regulation, consumerism, etc. The main spatial outcome was the formation of a 'new centre' in Bogotá where the most important transactions take place. We call this centre the NCA that is linked to the HMC through a linear sub-centre and *La Hacienda's* (north-south) axis. Hence the NCA is juxtaposed to the HMC (i.e. the linear agglomeration of sub-centres created from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 1970s) and the spatial duality of the previous period is re-created: on the one side, the central space of 'politics-religiosity', and on the other, the spatial concentration of 'exchange processes'. Interestingly, this trend (informed by post-modern mechanisms) develops simultaneously with conservative 'urban imaging' processes that are dominated by a political-cultural elite who reproduces uncritically the spatial language of *La Hacienda*. This is a language that is mostly spatialized and constantly re-created within the HMC.

The spatial structure of Bogotá is therefore shaped by strong market forces allied to traditional politics rooted in an oligarchical order. In turn, this spatial structure provides the necessary functional and semiotic features to reproduce the socio-spatial order. Whilst HMC's iconic elements and conventions trigger 'sense making' processes that facilitate the hegemony of an authoritarian and monopolist form of power, the NCA

provides privileged central spaces dominated by the FDB where most of the required information to maintain the established social relations is managed. None of these major central areas spatially prevail, thus creating unstable hierarchies, but together denote ‘the sacralisation of authoritarianism’<sup>257</sup>.

Our semiotic analysis suggests that Bogotá’s spatial structure belongs to a socio-cultural type of ‘urban centrality’. We refer to a specific organisation of spatial symbolism whose ‘logic of concentration’ of spatial signifiers can be also observed within other major urban centres of Latin America. Therefore, the de-coding of the urban centrality of Bogotá is useful to understand and orientate interpretations of the spatial structures of cities such as Quito, Lima or Santiago that present similar locational, morphological and functional characteristics. As other authors like Kingman and Goetschel (2005: 98ff) have suggested, the system of *la hacienda* played a major role in Ecuador and Perú, which might explain the development of this sort of spatial structures as well as phenomena such as the ‘idealization’ of the colonial past and the related “construction of citizenship on authoritarian foundations” (Kingman & Goetschel, 2005: 98). Moreover, the study of Lima developed by Ludeña (2002) also links the notions of ‘centrality’ and ‘power’ and, in so doing, identifies a process of construction of a centre within an “authoritarian tradition” (Ludeña, 2002). Thus, our semiotic procedure of bridging historical associative structures (social structures) and spatial structures through the notion of centrality can be established and generalised to de-code other Latin American cities.

However, the semiotic reading of urban centrality can also be applied to systematically and informatively differentiate cities within the Latin American geography. For instance, the differentiation of cities such as Bogotá or Lima from other capitals where the systems of *la encomienda* and *la hacienda* had different impacts and the elites chose other kind of socio-spatial strategies to deal with social and urban crises. This is the case of cities like Buenos Aires and Montevideo which present opposing tendencies; for example, the re-coding of original city centres and the maintenance of more stable spatial hierarchies in time. Hence, our semiotic approach problematizes the generalization of a single type of city for the whole region which is developed within the ‘modernisation’ and ‘dependent urbanization’ perspectives. The Latin American

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<sup>257</sup> For details of the final de-coding process of Bogotá’s super-centre see chapter seven titled ‘decoding spatial fragmentation’.

region is a definite cultural geography with a particular history but this does not necessarily involve the existence of a single type of 'Latin American City'. In this regard, we stand much closer to the field of 'Latin American urban culture' and Romero's (2004) categorization of divergent structures in the subcontinent linked to strong historical arrangements e.g. the dualism of noble and commercial/bourgeois cities led by different kinds of elites.

To further conclude, we posit that the 'modernised noble city' of Bogotá and its 'fragmented' urban centrality are subject to change. When addressing Bogotá we are referring to a historical and cultural creation and thus to an interpretable and transformable entity. To effectively act upon this creation it is necessary to be aware of the 'spatial code' that allows for the (re)production of Bogotá's structural conditions. According to our analysis, this code involves the interrelation of a set of signifieds which constitute the 'structural meaning' of 'the sacralisation of authoritarianism'. This is an unstable code that provides a certain cohesiveness to the unsolved tension between the enforced maintenance of *La Hacienda's* values (community) within an 'exclusive' modernity, and an actual modernisation (society) of the social system.

Thus, a given transformation requires the addressing of this conflict between 'community' and 'society'. Considering our analytic triad<sup>258</sup>, a process of transformation can start either in the sphere of spatial practices and representations, or in the realm of representational spaces. Taking advantage of the findings of this research, we suggest delineating actions regarding the analysis of the semiotic dimension of 'representational spaces' (spatial signs) according to a 'spatial reflexivity'<sup>259</sup>. This is a type of reasoning that seeks a different socio-spatial relation between 'tradition and modernity', which in our case refers to the construction of an 'inclusive urban modernity' that incorporates the majorities into a space production emancipated from the ties to a tradition rooted in 'authoritarianism and spatial homogenization'. Consequently we propose two possible lines of action: first, to question critically established 'urban readings' through the re-interpretation of the

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<sup>258</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>259</sup> The notion 'spatial reflexivity' is inspired in the concept of "reflexive urbanism" (Hassenpflug, 2006a/2006b) which calls for a reflexivity to reconcile 'tradition and modernity' or to 'modernise modernity' within the European 'post-industrial' or 'post-fordist' context. We adopt the reflection on the relation between 'tradition and modernity', but adapt it to our context of analysis.



‘representative condition’ of significant central spaces; second, to create new spatial signs to redefine the dominant and uneven spatial hierarchies.

The first line of action includes the elaboration and socialisation of academic products such as this research project. In this regard, we call for critical stances about the role of *La Hacienda* in spatial developmental processes and therefore recommend a thoughtful assessment of a structure of values rooted in colonialism<sup>260</sup> which restrains social imagination and consequently the construction of an alternative collective identity. There is a need for ‘denaturalizing’ current representations of space that mystify the semiotic content of central spaces. These are representations that are functional to uneven and highly concentrated forms of power. Specifically, the fields of cultural critique and spatial planning must denounce the uncritical re-spatialization of political power according to pre-modern conventions as well as the ‘meaningless’ or ‘functionalist’ de-concentration of official institutions within the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s central area and in the CAN sector respectively<sup>261</sup>. The *Proceso de Paz* (peace process) that aims at “terminating the social conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace in Colombia”<sup>262</sup> demands the re-signification and construction of new spatial signs, especially signs of power.

In this regard, we recommend transforming ‘spatial icons’ of traditional structures into ‘symbolic signs’ of Colombia’s urban and social history. This transformation involves, on the one hand, a rational physical transgression of the spatial signs of the historical oligarchical order (e.g. institutional buildings, urban spaces, etc.), and on the other hand, their corresponding re-functionalization. We refer to the modification of significant elements i.e. ‘the ground’ of public buildings and open spaces (e.g. roofs, facades, spatial conventions like verticality/horizontality that characterise squares, streets, etc.) and their re-utilization, for instance, the shift from a

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<sup>260</sup> We understand ‘colonialism’ as an authoritarian homogenizing project that presupposed a strong “veto of socio-cultural differentiation” (Romero, 2004)

<sup>261</sup> This particular reflection regarding the *Plaza de Bolívar* and the CAN (which are cores historically and spatially related) acquires particular importance because of the interrelated urban renewal interventions *Proyecto Ministerios* and *Ciudad CAN*. These projects are envisioned within the *Plaza de Bolívar*’s area and the CAN sector and are key components of Bogotá’s current planning agenda. Interestingly, these are projects where members of the FDB and of the traditional political elite are directly involved. A revision of official documents as well as attendance to events where these projects were socialised suggest that both, the conservative normativism of urban heritage discourses and the functionalistic approach to space (addressed in previous chapters) structure these highly influential interventions. However, it is not possible to develop a detailed analysis of these projects within the temporal limits defined in this study (i.e. the end of the 2000s).

<sup>262</sup> [www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co](http://www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co)

political/governmental function to an educational, cultural or even residential function. These two actions allow for alternative ‘abductive processes’ and the shifting of the original meanings of these spatial signs. In other words, this approach involves that the deliberated alteration of the form of these signs and their re-functionalization would cause a transformation of everyday collective interpretations/perceptions, hence the increment of public awareness concerning the built environment. This awareness presupposes the critical construction of a lasting memory of historical events but also of spaces that were instrumental within the enforced and violent maintenance of vertical and authoritarian socio-political structures.

The second line of action has to do with the socio-political appropriation of the ‘critical fissure’ of Bogotá’s supercentre. Guillén (1979) coined the term ‘critical fissure’ to illustrate the gap left by *La Hacienda*’s risky modernisation strategies which could be used to create a new type of society. In this research we focused on privileged actors and their capacity to orient urban processes, construct consensus that legitimise their intellectual and moral leadership and consolidate the foundations of Bogotá’s space production and spatial hegemony. The few references made to counterhegemonic forces from the civil society respond to their limited agency caused by Colombia’s huge social inequalities and a political constitution that, until 1991, left little leeway to subordinate groups or social organisations. Nonetheless, recent changes in Colombian institutions and the peace process are creating new possibilities for the participation of organisations of the civil society in decision making processes. In this sense Schönig’s (2007) studies about civil society’s engagement in urban and regional planning are helpful to comprehend the limits and possibilities of non-state and non-market actors to use the critical fissure to propose alternative spatial developments.

In our case, we introduce the idea of a ‘critical fissure’ to refer to the city’s east-west axis (i.e. the *Calle 26* or *Avenida El Dorado*) that can be used as a functional and semiotic material to re-code the whole spatial arrangement. This re-coding would involve a spatial re-hierarchization of collective practices and representations of the state and of empowered economic, cultural and political organisations of the civil society that allows for a re-signification of Bogotá’s spatial structure.

For instance, new spatial signifiers of alternative power relations could be arranged along this east-west axis in order to hierarchically signify ‘democracy’ and

‘knowledge/information’. In this manner, ‘politics’ could be detached from the divine or sacral spheres which, at present, are ‘merged’ or conflated within the hegemonic arrangement of the *Plaza de Bolívar*. In this regard the CAN area has the potential to become a ‘counteracting city core’ due to its strategic location (topographical centre of the agglomeration), its historical contents connected to the crisis of *La Hacienda*, and the presence of governmental institutions as well as the campus of the *Universidad Nacional*, the main public university of Colombia. This ‘counteracting city core’ would be a spatial sign with the potential to signify the society’s past and present in reference to an expected future according to new cultural coordinates<sup>263</sup>.

Existing punctual and meaningful places and spatial expressions along the *Calle 26* or east-west axis should be incorporated to the ‘counteracting city core’, for instance, the *Centro de Memoria Paz y Reconciliación* and the planned *Museo Nacional de la Memoria de Colombia* that promote the construction of historical memory of Colombia’s social conflict, as well as political graffiti painted not only over some sections of the east-west axis but also on buildings of the political-C.B.D. These spatial facts and projects have caught the attention of the public in Colombia and abroad, and we interpret them as indicators of potential socio-cultural change which can be spatially encouraged the community of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*, by street art organisations, victims and human rights organizations, as well as other progressive social and political forces that can articulate around an alternative spatial hegemonic project using as key *material* Bogotá’s urban centrality configuration.

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<sup>263</sup> In reference to the semiotic potential of the CAN sector, we would like to highlight that the Campus of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* (located right next to the governmental/official buildings of the CAN) was recently proposed as the “*Sede de la Paz*” (El Espectador, 01-07-2016) or ‘headquarters/centre of the peace’ where the final agreement between the representatives of the state and of the subversive forces involved in the current ‘peace process’ could be signed.

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### **Online and newspaper articles**

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- ‘Apertura Económica. Comercio Internacional del siglo XXI’, *Revista Semana* (18 Feb 1991).
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- PIFFANO, G. (2013) *Infierno o Paraíso*, Bogotá: Filmico producciones y Canal Capital.





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## Ausbildung / Qualifikationen

- Seit April 2008: Doktorand an der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
- 2005 - 2007: Master-Aufbaustudiengang „Integrated International Urban Studies“ (IIUS) an der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar und der Tongji-Universität Shanghai, China, Abschluss: Master für „Integrated International Urban Studies“
- 1998 - 2004: Studium der Architektur an der Nationalen Universität von Kolumbien in Bogotá, Abschluss: Architektur (ähnlich des deutschen Diploms)

## Auszeichnungen

- 2012 - 2013: Stipendiat der FAZIT-STIFTUNG, Frankfurt Am Main
- 2009 - 2012: Stipendiat des KAAD (Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst)
- 2006: Zweiter Preis beim Ideenwettbewerb für Stadtplanerische Interventionen „Cool center of Gera - Geras starke Mitte“ in Gera, Thema: Entwicklung urbaner Strategien zur Stärkung des Stadtzentrums im Rahmen der postindustriellen Restrukturierung
- 2006: Zweiter Preis beim städtebaulichen Realisierungswettbewerb in der Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald, Hafenstraße: „Nördliche Mühlenvorstadt Solares Wohnen am Wasser“ für Machleidt + Partner, Büro für Städtebau, Thema: Neuentwicklung eines ehemaligen Industriegebiets in Zeiten schrumpfender Städte
- 2005: Erster Preis beim Städtebauwettbewerb: Riesplatz-Stiftingasse-Billrothgasse, Graz, Österreich, im Auftrag von BUSarchitektur, Wien, Thema: „Entwicklung eines neuen Universitätsgeländes und öffentlichen Platzes für die Stadt Graz“
- 2005: Auszeichnung von der Nationalen Universität von Kolumbien für die Abschlussarbeit des Studiengangs Architektur / Städtebau
- 1999 und 2004: Auswahl für die Teilnahme am „Salon de Octubre“ (Jährliche Ausstellung der besten Projekte von Studenten der Nationalen Universität von Kolumbien)

## Berufserfahrung

- Ab August 2016: Professor des Lehrstuhls an der Pontificia Universidad Javeriana und an der Universidad de La Salle – Bogotá (Kolumbien). Unterrichtstätigkeit in Bachelor- und Masterstudiengängen
- Januar 2015 - Februar 2016: Lehrer-Forscher vollzeitbeschäftigt an der Fakultät für Wissenschaften des Habitats der Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá. Unterrichts- bzw. Forschungstätigkeiten im Bachelor-Programm in Architektur sowie im Masterstudiengang in

Wissenschaften des Habitats mittels theoretischer Kurse, Design-Workshops (Forschungspraxis) und Leitung der Abschlussarbeiten über die Forschung von urbanen Themen.

- März 2014 - Dezember 2015: Professor des Lehrstuhls für Wissenschaften des Habitats an der Universidad de La Salle. Bogotá. Leitung der Abschlussarbeiten über die Forschung von urbanen Themen.

- Januar 2014 - Mai 2014: Professor des Lehrstuhls an der Fakultät für Humanwissenschaften der Universidad del Rosario. Bogotá. Unterrichtsfach: „Urbane Welten“. Grundlagen der Urbanistik für Studenten verschiedener akademischen Karrieren wie z.B. Soziologie, Anthropologie, Kommunikation, u.a.

- August 2008 - September 2008: Stadtplaner für Machleidt + Partner, Büro für Städtebau, Berlin

- November 2006 - Januar 2007: Senior Planner für Land\_Au, Beratungsunternehmen für Architektur und Planung, Shanghai, China, Berater für Städtebau und Planung verschiedener Projekte für die Städte Shanghai und Dalian, China

- April - August 2006: Praktikum bei Machleidt + Partner, Büro für Städtebau, Berlin, Aufgaben: Stadtplanung und Städtebau

- April - Juni 2005: Architekt für BUSarchitektur, Wien

Juli - August 2004: Architektur- und Städtebaubüro Fernando Cortes Larreamendy, Regionalplanung, Bogotá, Kolumbien

- 2003 - 2004: Entwurf und Konstruktion von zwei Einfamilienhäusern in Tunja, Kolumbien, selbstständige Arbeit

### **Publikationen**

- Jiménez, C, 2011: Redefining the concept of Heritage. Comments from the study of the symbolic dimension of space and the Latin American city. Der Artikel wurde teilweise akzeptiert in EURE [www.eure.cl](http://www.eure.cl) Lateinamerikanische Zeitschrift für Territorial und Stadtforschung.

- Jiménez, C, 2010: La ciudad latino americana como símbolo colectivo. Anotaciones sobre patrimonio urbano y arquitectónico desde el estudio de la dimensión simbólica del espacio. In: Congreso Internacional „La ciudad como patrimonio: historia urbanística de las ciudades latino americanas. ISBN 978-950-33-0814-1

- Amann, J; Echelmeyer, K; Jiménez, C; Morgner, T, 2007: Sichuan bei lu. A generic case study. In: Urban space and its creation. Zusammenstellung von verschiedenen Seminararbeiten, herausgegeben von der Tongji-Universität Shanghai, China

- Jiménez, C, 2006: Nördliche Mühlenvorstadt Solares - Wohnen am Wasser, Schrumpfende Städte in Deutschland, Der Fall Greifswald. In: Jahrbuch der Modellprojekte / Year book of Model Projects 2005-2007. Weimar: Druckerei Schöpfung

- Amtmann, K; Jiménez, C; Wagner, W, 2006: „Winds of change“ In: „Geras starke Mitte“, Ideenwettbewerb am Institut für Europäische Urbanistik – Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Caaschwitz, Grafischer Betrieb Sell.

### **Beteiligung an wissenschaftlich-akademischen Netzwerken, Kongressen, Internationalen Workshops, Projekten, Vorlesungen und komplementären Kursen**

- 2014: Referat „Stadt: Konzeption, Wahrnehmung und Repräsentation“. Veranstaltung: The Urban Art Mapping Laboratory. Institution: Stiftung Gilberto Alzate Avendaño.

- 2013: Teilnahme an dem SAL15 “Seminar für lateinamerikanische Architektur”. Bogotá 22-26 September.
- 2013: Teilnahme am Kongress Smart-City-Expo. Bogotá 2-4 Oktober.
- Seit 2012: Mitglied des Netzes ehemaliger Stipendiaten des Katholischen Akademischen Ausländerdienstes– KAAD, Deutschland und der KAAD-Latinos, Bildung - Wissenschaft - Forschung – Hochschulen.
- Seit 2012: Mitglied des Netzes der lateinamerikanischen Wissenschaftler des Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung in Deutschland - CIM.
- 2011: Teilnahme am Kongress „Stadt der Zukunft – Nachhaltige Urbanisierung“. Berlin, 15-18 Mai. Veranstalter KAAD (Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst)
- 2010: Redner am Kongress „La ciudad como patrimonio. Historia Urbanística de las ciudades latino americanas“. Córdoba, Argentinien, 28-29 Oktober. Veranstalter des Kongress: Forschungsinstitut für Architektur und Städtebauliche Denkmalschutz. Architektur Fakultät National Universität Córdoba.
- 2010: Präsentation meiner Doktorarbeit Forschungsthema in Lima (Peru) an der Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. Dieser Vortrag wurde den Teilnehmern des „Workshop in Urban Research“ am Lehrstuhl von Prof. Dr. Wiley Ludeña gegeben.
- 2010: Teilnahme am Seminar: 200 Jahre Unabhängigkeit in Lateinamerika - Chancen und Hindernisse auf dem Weg zu mehr politischer Integration. Veranstalter KAAD (Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst) Müllheim a. d. Ruhr (09-12.09.10)
- 2009: Kurs: Gesellschaft und Raum. Forschungskonzepte. Institut für Geographie der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena.
- 2009: Mitbegründer und Mitglied von LATAM-URBANA Forschungsgruppe zum wissenschaftlichen Austausch und zur Erforschung der lateinamerikanischen Stadt. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.
- 2008: Teilnahme am Projekt: „Opfer der Moderne?“ der Robert-Bosch-Stiftung, Fakultät Medien der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, die Stadtverwaltung Weimar, e-WERK Weimar, und Guing’art Virus Marseille.
- 2006: Präsentation des urbanen Projektes „Winds of Change“. Veranstaltung: Präsentation des Ideenwettbewerbs für die Stadt Gera - Deutschland. Institutionen: Stadtverwaltung Gera, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar und Stiftung „Ja - für Gera“.
- 2008: Teilnahme in der Konferenz The Right to the City. Prospects for Critical Urban Theory and Practice. TU Berlin, FU Berlin
- 2008: Mitglied der Gruppe „Absolventen und Freunde der Europäischen Urbanistik“ der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
- 2008: Teilnahme am Workshop „DIE LATEINAMERIKANISCHE STADT IM WANDEL“. TU Berlin.
- 2004-2005 Teilnehmen im Kooperationsabkommen TU Wien und Die Nationale Universität von Kolumbien, mit Teilnahme im Internationalen Workshop für Städtebau: La Habana-Borde Sur, TU Wien und Nationale Universität von Kolumbien in Havanna, Kuba.
- 2004: Mitglied und organisatorischer Assistent des Workshops: Internationaler Workshop für Architektur und Städtebau in tropischen Regionen, TU-Berlin und Nationale Universität von Kolumbien in San Andres Island, Kolumbien

**Sprachkenntnisse:** Spanisch (Muttersprache), Englisch (fließend), Deutsch (Mittelstufe)



## **Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung**

Ich erkläre hiermit ehrenwörtlich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne unzulässige Hilfe Dritter und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus anderen Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Daten und Konzepte sind unter Angabe der Quelle unmissverständlich gekennzeichnet.

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1. Anastasia Boldireff (Korrekturlesung)
2. Patricia Klein (Korrekturlesung)
3. Andrés Barrios (Herstellung von Grafiken)
4. Natalia González (Herstellung von Grafiken und Organisation der Literaturangaben)

Weitere Personen waren an der inhaltlich-materiellen Erstellung der vorliegenden Arbeit nicht beteiligt. Insbesondere habe ich hierfür nicht die entgeltliche Hilfe von Vermittlungs- bzw. Beratungsdiensten (Promotionsberater oder anderen Personen) in Anspruch genommen. Niemand hat von mir unmittelbar oder mittelbar geldwerte Leistungen für Arbeiten erhalten, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Inhalt der vorgelegten Dissertation stehen.

Die Arbeit wurde bisher weder im In- noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt.

Ich versichere ehrenwörtlich, dass ich nach bestem Wissen die reine Wahrheit gesagt und nichts verschwiegen habe.

Bogotá, 2. November 2016

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Camilo Arturo Jiménez González